

Millions pray for ferry victims

CAIRO (R) — Millions of Muslims across Egypt prayed on Friday for the victims of an Egyptian ferry that sank six days ago while the search continued for some 350 bodies still missing or trapped in the wreck. Worshippers performed a special "prayer for the missing" after Friday prayers, asking God to bless the souls of the victims, who were called martyrs in sermons. An official at a collection centre in the Red Sea port of Safage told Reuters by telephone a total of 119 bodies had been recovered. Eighty three had been handed to relatives. Abdul Sattar Al Sami, a Health Ministry official whose job is to issue death certificates, said 24 bodies had been brought ashore on Friday but added that navy and other vessels were at sea continuing the search. Only 180 passengers and crew members were rescued from the Salem Express, which sank off Safage after hitting a reef on Saturday night in one of the world's worst shipping disasters. Some 650 people were on board, most of them Egyptian pilgrims or workers returning from jobs in Saudi Arabia. Cairo's afternoon newspaper Al-Masara reported that relatives were no longer seeking bodies as those coming in had decayed beyond recognition.

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Anglican leader to visit Jordan, Jerusalem

LONDON (AP) — Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, spiritual head of the state Church of England and leader of the world's 70 million Anglicans, will visit Jordan and occupied Jerusalem early next month. His London office said the visit has been arranged at the invitation of the Anglican bishop of Jerusalem, Samir Kafaty, to allow Archbishop Carey to take part in 150th anniversary celebrations of the Anglican Bishopric in Jerusalem and to support the work of the Anglican Church in the diocese. It said: "It is one of a series of pastoral visits which the Archbishop makes to provinces within the Anglican communion." "While he is in Amman (Jan. 3-4) and Jerusalem (Jan. 4-8) he will meet religious and political leaders and discuss their hopes for the peace process and for the future of the region."

U.N. issues Gulf damage claim forms

GENEVA (AP) — The United Nations Friday issued forms with which individuals can claim up to \$100,000 from Iraq for damages linked to its invasion and occupation of Kuwait. Up to two million claimants are expected, the U.N. has said. The standard forms can be used by hundreds of thousands of foreign workers who lost their jobs and belongings when fleeing Kuwait between the Aug. 2, 1990 invasion and March 2, 1991, when a U.S.-led allied force had ousted Iraqi forces. Also qualifying are people who suffered serious injury or the death of a family member, and property damage claimants, the U.N. compensation commission said in a statement. No start is in sight for payouts, though, because Iraq has not accepted a Security Council plan to sell oil under U.N. supervision. Part of the hoped-for revenues would finance a special compensation fund (see page 2).

3 Saudis beheaded

NICOSIA (R) — Three Saudis convicted of murder or burglary were beheaded in public after Friday prayers in Saudi Arabia. Riyadh's Radio quoting a statement by the Saudi Interior Ministry, said Abdullah Ben Mubarak Ben Faraj Al Harbi had his head cut off by sword after he was convicted of stabbing to death a Yemeni during a quarrel over money. The statement said two other Saudis — Ibrahim Ben Yahya A'Siri and Abdullah Ben Obeid Ben Mishkhus — received the same punishment for various burglaries. The last reported beheading in the kingdom was in Nov. 20, when a Pakistani was executed in the Red Sea port of Jeddah after he had been found guilty of smuggling heroin. At least 18 Saudis were beheaded this year for crimes ranging from murder to drug trafficking.

Amnesty asks Syria for details of released prisoners

LONDON (R) — Amnesty International asked Syria Friday to make public a list of prisoners reported to have been pardoned and released recently. It quoted Syria as saying that some 2,800 prisoners "who committed crimes against national security" had been pardoned and would be freed immediately. But the London-based human rights group said there was still uncertainty about who had been pardoned and whether some of those said to have been released had in fact been freed. Amnesty said it had confirmation that more than 700 prisoners had been released since Dec. 14 and added that further releases were expected.

Markovic resigns

BELGRADE (R) — Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic announced his resignation in a statement Friday after a row over a new federal budget. Mr. Markovic, a Croat, said in a statement read to reporters that he could not accept the proposed budget for next year because it was aimed at continuing the fighting in the breakaway Republic of Croatia. He said 81 per cent of the draft budget would go towards the Serbian-led federal army.

Jordan confident deadlock in talks will be removed

AMMAN (J.T.) — Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber Friday expressed confidence that the current deadlock in Arab-Israeli talks will be removed and the peace drive will regain momentum. Speaking in an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Dr. Abu Jaber affirmed that a Middle East peace settlement can only be achieved after "a total Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem." "Although there seem to be temporary stumbling in the peace process, it is inevitable that it will head in the right direction and towards a just and comprehensive settlement in accordance with the principles of international legitimacy," Dr. Abu Jaber said. He said: "The Arab-Israeli conflict is an ideological, political and cultural struggle that is deeply rooted in us (Arabs and Israelis) and therefore, no human brain can imagine ending this dispute and reaching a peaceful and just settlement overnight." Dr. Abu Jaber's statement underscored Jordan's determination to pursue peace negotiations with Israel. "It is unwise to look at the peace efforts in isolation of international developments, notably the fall of the communist camp and the emergence of new world powers as well as a unipolarised new world order," Dr. Abu Jaber told Petra.

Refugees want continued talks to prove Arab point

By Wafa Amr
The Associated Press
AMMAN — Palestinian refugees said Friday they feel frustrated and insulted by the way the latest Arab-Israeli peace talks turned out, but they want the talks to continue in order to prove a point. "The Palestinian delegation must return to Washington to continue negotiations with Israel so that the world will realise that Israel is the party that doesn't want peace," said Muhammad Yousef, 37, a resident of Wadlat refugee camp in the suburbs of Amman. "The deadlock in the talks caused frustration among the Palestinian community here," he said. "But it was expected, and that does not mean the end of the peace road." Mr. Yousef was reacting to an impasse in the second round of peace talks in Washington, which adjourned until January after 15 days of procedural wrangling. Negotiations between Jordan and Israel snagged over the segregation of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation into two tracks during talks with Israel. Palestinians, intent on demonstrating their independence as a people and their desire for statehood, demanded that Israel negotiate with them separately. Israel, rejecting an independent Palestinian state, insisted on a joint umbrella for the talks. As a result, negotiations took place in a U.S. State Department hallway, with both sides refusing to enter meeting rooms. Mr. Yousef, a native of the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip, fled to Jordan following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Like an estimated 1.2 million Palestinian refugees, he lives in one of the largest of 11 squallid camps across Jordan. Mr. Yousef, surrounded by friends, spoke as he was leaving an Amman mosque following noon prayers. "Palestinians in this camp have fled from their homes in 1948 and 1967, and we have become accustomed to Israeli intransigence," Mr. Yousef said. "It will not change now." Residents of other Palestinian camps considered the "corridor diplomacy" as an insult. "We want the world to start realising the truth they have been blind for many years, to know that Arabs want peace but Israel wants to continue its occupation," said 41-year-old Omar Hassan, a vendor in the second-largest refugee camp, Al Hussein. "We have made concession after concession in our striving for peace although we are the right owners, yet Israel continues to ask for more compromise and stamps on our dignity with its feet," he said. Mr. Hassan was interrupted by an old woman, wearing the Palestinian traditional dress. "This peace conference is aimed at stripping us of our remaining pride and identity," she shouted, "and both Palestinian and Jordanian negotiators have been insulted by America and Israel in Washington by talking in the corridors."

Israelis abduct three Lebanese; boobytrap kills 3

NABATIYEH (Agencies) — Israeli commandos seized six civilians in South Lebanon early Friday and a booby-trapped flashlight they reportedly left behind exploded as two children played with it, killing them and an adult, police said. Three other civilians were wounded in the blast at 11:45 a.m. (0945 GMT) in a butcher's store in the southern Lebanese village of Jibsheet, three kilometres south of the raid scene, police said. They said the captured men were taken in handcuffs to an interrogation centre near a 20-house tobacco-growing hamlet between Jibsheet and Adsheet, where three of the detainees were kept and the three others freed. Police identified the detainees as newsman Shawki Fahs, 42,

Palestinians press for stronger U.S. role

WASHINGTON (AP) — Palestinian negotiators say U.S. involvement is needed to get peace talks with Israel moving when they resume next month, but so far there is no sign it is forthcoming. President George Bush, voicing disappointment that the talks failed to move beyond an impasse over procedure, said Thursday the United States was a catalyst for talks but would not "dictate solutions" to either side. Palestinian delegates to the Middle East peace talks that recessed on Wednesday were leaving for home on Friday, following their Israeli counterparts by a day. Hanan Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegates, expressed regret that the United States failed to intervene. She said American involvement — and pressure from Israeli public opinion on that country's negotiators — were all that could break the procedural deadlock. "We felt there was an unwillingness on the part of the United States to take an active and driving role," she said. "All these promises (by the United States before the talks) were in effect not fulfilled." Israeli Ambassador Zalman Shoval, however, praised the United States for refusing several Arab requests to intervene during the talks. Intervention "would have reinforced the perception among some of the Arabs, a wrong perception that peace has to be negotiated with the United States and not with Israel," he said.

Dr. Ashrawi, strongly denouncing what she regarded as Israeli intransigence, also said the United States may not be able to serve as an "evenhanded peace broker" because of its "special relations with Israel." Mr. Bush said the mere fact the enemies met was significant. He said he was told "some progress was made." "It is going to be done at the negotiating table," the president said. "And thank God it has started."

However, "a lot of time was spent talking about modalities and locations," Mr. Bush told reporters at a White House news conference, "and obviously we would have liked to see more progress."

The United States made clear that the joint forum, agreed to before the Oct. 30 start of the Middle East talks in Madrid, should be preserved.

"We would have preferred that Israeli-Palestinian talks, under the aegis of a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation, had progressed" further, said Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian.

Nonetheless, he said, the United States had not intervened. Mr. Bush said the United States sees itself as "a catalyst, not attempting to dictate solutions" to either side.

Dr. Ashrawi said: "I would like to make it clear: There was no progress. It was a criminal waste of time."

Palestinians, intent on demonstrating their independence as a people and their desire for a country of their own, are demanding that Israel negotiate with them separately. Israel, rejecting an independent Palestinian state, insists on a joint Palestinian-Jordanian umbrella for the talks.

As a result, negotiations took place on a sofa in a State Department hallway, with the sides refusing to proceed into meeting rooms.

The United States made clear that the joint forum, agreed to before the Oct. 30 start of the Middle East talks in Madrid, should be preserved.

Mr. Bush also said the Soviets, and the Russians who are taking over the foreign affairs portfolio of the crumbling Soviet Union, want to continue playing the same role as co-sponsor of the talks with the United States. The message was conveyed by Russian President Boris Yeltsin to visiting Secretary of State James Baker, Mr. Bush said.

Mr. Baker said Moscow would — as planned — play host to



KING LEAVES FOR BRITAIN: His Majesty King Hussein Friday left for London on a private visit to the United Kingdom. The King was seen off at the airport by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker (photo above). The King was accompanied by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Hamzah and Prince Hashem.

Jordan seeks peace, but not peace at any cost — King

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan is keen to achieve peace, but not any peace and not at any price, His Majesty King Hussein said. Addressing the 32nd batch of army officers from the Royal Command and Staff Academy, the King said Jordan's participation in the Middle East peace process was aimed at the full implementation of international legitimacy since the occupied territory in question are Arab owned and not an Israeli property. By raising the slogan of peace for peace without giving up occupied land, Israel is not paving the ground for any real peace but it is using the peace negotiations only to endorse its illegal occupation of Arab territory, the King said. By raising the slogan peace for peace, Israel is trying to promise not to launch aggression in return for the Arabs relinquishing their rights to their lands to the Jewish state, which simply means establishing peace under continuing Israeli threat, the King said. Such concept can by no means constitute a basis for peace, the King added. King Hussein accused Israel of participating in the negotiations only to seek endorsement of its occupation of Arab land in violation of Resolution 242. The King said while the negotiations are going on, Israel is trying to

put obstacles in the path of peace through the actions of the Jewish extremists in the occupied territories. The whole world community, he said, should now realise which party is for peace and which party is placing obstacles in achieving a viable peace and security in the region. On the domestic situation, King Hussein said that democratic life in Jordan remains the best guarantee for the country's security and stability, regardless of the difficult circumstances it is facing. Jordan, he added, is proud of its institutions, its citizens and its circle of friends. Jordan is facing the present stage of economic, financial and social difficulties together with the enormous problem of unemployment and foreign debt and meagre resources and is trying to carry out an economic restructuring programme, the King noted. He said that for these problems to be solved cooperation and contribution on the part of all citizens is required as the executive authority can by no means shoulder this huge task on its own. "We cannot deny that we are facing very hard times requiring strong resolve and sincere efforts on the part of every citizen," the King said. "Our country demands from us at this crucial stage to stand together with resolve in facing the difficult circumstances," the King added.

Arabs, Israelis protest Silwan settlement

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Thousands of Israeli peace activists joined hands with Palestinians in Jerusalem Friday in a demonstration against Jewish settlements in the village of Silwan.

Palestinians and Israelis accused Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's government and Jewish settlers, who seized five Arab homes in Silwan on Dec. 12, of trying to undermine U.S.-brokered Middle East peace talks.

"It is an expression of a lot of sentiment inside Jerusalem that this kind of provocation by the government and by the settlers is simply not acceptable," said Hebrew University professor Galia Golan, an organiser of the demonstration.

Member of Parliament Yair Tsaaban, head of the opposition Mapam Party, termed the Jewish

settlers' takeover of Arab houses in Silwan a provocation. "We are demonstrating here, Israelis and Palestinians, to express our determined will to overcome such a provocation," Mr. Tsaaban said.

Some 2,000 demonstrators stood with banners along the main street in Silwan, outside the houses seized by settlers earlier this month. A police helicopter flew overhead throughout the demonstration.

Palestinian homeowners have petitioned the courts against the seizures, which were carried out under police protection after the Israeli government authorised the takeover.

The United States condemned Jewish settlers as trying to undermine peace efforts and urged the Israeli government to restrain them.

Palestinian nationalist leader

Faisal Al Hussein, who has been visiting Silwan daily to support displaced Arab families, joined the demonstrators. "People in Silwan can now be sure they have partners on the other side and that we can fight together to establish a Palestinian state alongside Israel," Mr. Hussein said.

A dozen right-wing Israelis demonstrated blue and white Israeli flags nearby. Police kept the two groups apart.

U.N. condemns Israeli practices

The General Assembly Thursday voted overwhelmingly to demand that Israel stop building new or expanded Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

Coming just three days after the General Assembly's vote to

repeal the 1975 "Zionism-is-racism" resolution, the vote shows that Israel will not be spared scathing criticism of policies that the assembly still objects to.

The resolution, which the assembly cannot enforce, passed 135-2, with the United States and Israel opposing it, and Byelorussia, Canada, Dominica, and the Soviet Union abstaining.

It expresses alarm at the deterioration in living conditions among the Palestinian people in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem.

The Assembly also rejected all other Israeli plans to change by the demographic character of the area.

Israeli officials have looked to the occupied territories as a prime site for new settlements for immigrating Soviet Jews and other in new Jewish residents.

responsibility for the success of the talks," he said in an oblique reference to its status as sole superpower after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Beijing has taken a relatively passive role in Middle East affairs, and was not invited to attend the previous talks.

In late November, Premier Li said in a message to the Palestinians that the sovereignty and security of Israel should be guaranteed.

Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens made a secret visit to Beijing last month, becoming Israel's first cabinet minister to visit China.

The North Korean News Agency said he came to Beijing from North Korea, where he met with President Kim Il Sung.

Mr. Arafat is scheduled to leave on Saturday for Vietnam, where he will meet President Vo Chi Cong and Communist Party chief Do Muoi.

"Owing to changes in the international situation, the United States should bear greater re-

Iraq, U.N. have stranglehold on each other's funds

By Peter James Spielmann
The Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — Although the Security Council has strangled Iraq's economy with its 16-month economic embargo the Baghdad government is hitting back by refusing to sell oil that would pay for U.N. operations.

The U.N. programme most directly affected by Iraq's tactic is the special commission formed to enforce an agreement ending the Gulf war. The commission has the task of destroying Iraq's chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programme, along with its ballistic missiles and "superguns."

The special commission is gearing up to destroy Iraq's enormous arsenal of chemical weapons — more than 125,000 munitions, including over 46,000 filled shells, bombs and warheads, many of them dangerously leaky. The cost of that project depends on whether the special commission relies on sophisticated Western disposal methods or approves a cheaper Iraqi plan to destroy the weapons, but U.N. officials estimated it could easily exceed \$100 million.

Iraqi officials are balking at paying a steep price for sophisticated disposal methods that would enrich Western chemical and high-technology companies, and U.N. officials are leaning towards approval of the Iraqi plan if it is revised to meet some of their safety and efficiency standards.

But even the cheaper Iraqi disposal plan costs money, which is supposed to come out of a \$1.6 billion one-time sale of Iraqi oil that the Security Council authorised in September.

The Iraqi government, however, has so far refused to proceed with the sale, saying that strict U.N. oversight of the transactions and the presence of U.N. and foreign oil company monitors is an insult to Iraq's sovereignty.

Iraq's U.N. ambassador, Abdul Amir Al Anbari, will

lead an Iraqi delegation that will meet the U.N.'s top financial officer, Kofi Annan, in Vienna on Jan. 6-7 to discuss the proposed oil sale. U.N. officials say privately they believe the Iraqis will eventually agree to the sale, perhaps after some face-saving arrangement is reached that will allow them to justify it to their public. However, the respected Cyprus-based weekly Middle East Economic Survey said no breakthroughs are expected.

Senior Iraqi press official Abdul Jabbar Mushin said Wednesday in Baghdad that the U.N. plan was designed to undercut Iraq's sovereignty. "We cannot give oil to other people to sell as they wish. It is against our freedom," he said.

Under the plan yet to be approved by Baghdad, the United Nations would monitor the sale of oil that would be sent through a pipeline to Turkey, and would set up a U.N. account for proceeds of the sale.

About \$1 billion would be used to pay for food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies Iraq needs, war reparations, and the cost of the U.N. operations in the Gulf, such as the special commission's work.

About \$90 million would go to pay for U.N. operations in Iraq and about \$480 million to war reparations for Kuwait.

U.N. weapons inspectors have had numerous run-ins with Iraqi officials trying to hide secret weapons programmes. Iraq had declared that it only had a peaceful nuclear programme, but U.N. and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors in September and seized blueprints for a nuclear weapon.

Iraqi soldiers blocked 44 U.N. and IAEA inspectors in a Baghdad parking lot for over four days in late September, demanding that they return documents they had seized. The Iraqis later relented.



SAFETY MEASURE: Palestinians in the Arab East Jerusalem neighbourhood put up barbed-wire fences in an attempt to prevent Jewish settlers from entering their property

Palestinians sue U.S. company that supplied tear-gas to Israel

PITTSBURGH (AP) — A U.S. company that sold tear-gas Israel is being sued for negligence by relatives of Palestinians who died after inhaling the gas during disturbances in the occupied territories.

Relatives of eight Palestinians filed suit Thursday in U.S. district court, saying Federal Laboratories Incorporated of Saltburg knew the tear-gas had caused civilian deaths during the Palestinian uprising.

The plaintiffs — 61 spouses and children of those killed — contend Federal Laboratories and its parent company, Transtechnology Corporation are liable for the deaths of eight Palestinians, who died between January 1990 and May 1991.

Federal Laboratories said it had not received a copy of the lawsuit and therefore could not comment.

But company president Robert Tumno confirmed tear-gas had been sold to Israel and acknowledged the gas could have been used improperly.

"Obviously, any product can be misused," Mr. Tumno said.

"You can kill somebody with anything, practically."

He declined to say whether the company, located about 40 kilometers east of Pittsburgh, has a current contract with Israel.

The Israeli government contended that there had been no proof the deaths were caused by tear-gas.

Various human rights organisations, including Amnesty International, say that exposure to tear-gas can be fatal to babies, the elderly and people with respiratory illnesses. Dr. Jonathan Fine, executive director of Physicians for Human Rights, said the Boston group found tear-gas can kill in confined spaces or after prolonged exposure.

"Transtechnology and Federal Laboratories are guilty of the worst kind of negligence and indifference, the kind that results in the deaths of innocent people," said Beth Stephens, an attorney for the Centre for Constitutional Rights, which filed the suit on behalf of the Palestinians.

The suit said the victims died after inhaling tear-gas fired on them by Israeli troops in the

occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Among the victims were a 46-year-old man buying vegetables in a market, a 45-year-old butcher walking out of a mosque and a 62-year-old woman sitting on her porch in a refugee camp, court papers said.

Each plaintiff in the case is seeking more than \$50,000 in damages. Ms. Stephens said the damages totalled "many millions" of dollars.

Israeli defence ministry offices were closed when the suit was filed, and officials were not immediately available for comment.

The Israeli army has defended the use of tear-gas, saying it is the best way to disperse large crowds without causing physical injury.

The U.N. Relief and Works Agency said more than 10,600 Palestinians were injured by tear-gas from December 1987 to October 1991. The United Nations attributed at least 44 deaths to the gas as of May 1989.

The U.N. agency said Thursday it had no updated figures for tear-gas-related deaths.

OAU says peace force for Somalia a possibility

ADDIS ABABA (R) — The head of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) said Thursday he would not rule out sending a peace-keeping force to end "senseless carnage" in the Somali capital, Mogadishu.

"We believe there is a need for concerted action at the international level to put an end to the present misery the Somali people are subjected to," OAU Secretary General Salim Abdullahi Salim told a news conference at the pan-African body's headquarters in the capital of neighbouring Ethiopia.

But he added such a force could only be sent with the accord of the parties to the country's most recent conflict which has killed some 4,000 people and injured at least 7,000 since it started on Nov. 17.

Somalia, an impoverished desert country on the Horn of Africa, has been virtually destroyed by 11 months of anarchy which began after dictator Mohammed Siad Barre was ousted from the capital by rebels last January.

Mr. Salim said the first priority for the OAU and the international community was to end the fighting now raging between the factions loyal to warlords Ali Mahdi Mohammed and Mohammed Farah Aideded.

"We cannot be indifferent to what is going on inside Somalia," Mr. Salim said.

Pressure has mounted in the past recently for international bodies such as the European Community or the United Nations to help stop the conflict and lead relief efforts in Somalia.

The U.N. has failed to establish a permanent presence in the capital for security reasons and relief efforts are being run by aid groups.

Mr. Salim said an offer he made on Wednesday to broker peace talks had received a mixed reception, but he said he believed it may still be possible to organise a peace conference.

Much of Mogadishu, once an exotic Indian Ocean port city, had been reduced to rubble by four weeks of clan warfare — savage even by Somalia's recent measure of brutality.

A Belgian air force Hercules C-130 on Thursday began regular relief flights to the city where medical supplies were almost totally exhausted.

Turkish prime minister presents new image

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel is a political leopard who has changed his spots.

His public image has changed so abruptly that many Turks still gape in wonder at the new Demirel — or "Baba (Pappa)" as he is now known.

Two months after his reelection, some people wonder whether the change is for real. Others are convinced it is.

"I can't figure what's come over him. The man is sounding more and more like (Chinese philosopher) Confucius every day," said Ayse Ildi, a Turkish doctor.

Mr. Demirel was last in power in 1980. Turkey under his leadership was on the brink of civil war and economic ruin.

The army stepped in cutting short his sixth term as prime minister and the generals stripped him of his political rights.

"That Demirel was an opportunist and a demagogue. He was power hungry and could be undemocratic," said a Western diplomat who did not want to be named. "Now we are presented with a man who is an angel. Is this for real?"

Veteran columnist Oktay Eksi says that after a lot of soul-searching he concluded that the change is real.

"He is playing his finals," said Mr. Eksi. "He has decided that it was time to stop being a politician and to start becoming a statesman."

The turnaround came last month when he abruptly scrapped his campaign to oust President Turgut Ozal.

Once a Demirel protégé, Mr. Ozal's star rose when his former boss was banished into the political wilderness by the army. First he became prime minister, then prime minister and finally the president.

Mr. Demirel vehemently opposed Ozal's presidency and vowed to replace him when he came to power. He did not win enough seats to achieve his goal.

"We cannot have a feud at the top of the state," he then declared. He let Mr. Ozal kiss him on both cheeks in a final peace gesture — something no one had expected him to do.

Mr. Demirel has been urging brotherhood, unity, and tolerance since his coalition with Erdal Inonu, chairman of the Social



Suleyman Demirel
Democratic Populist Party (SHP), took power last month.

He pledged to bring an end to violations of human rights and do away with all undemocratic laws.

"Turkey will become like any other Western European democracy," he declared.

In a historic speech he acknowledged the rights of Turkey's 10 million Kurds whose existence as a separate people Ankara has denied.

Kurdish extremists have been waging a bloody separatist war in the remote southeast. "From Istanbul to Diyarbakir all of this country is yours," he told a crowd in Diyarbakir, the biggest Kurdish city in Turkey.

Israelis kidnap three Lebanese

(Continued from page 1)

port city of Sidon, provincial capital of South Lebanon, police said.

Police and Lebanese army investigators said they believed the flashlight was planted in Mr. Nahal's car by the Israeli raiding party.

Diplomats and security sources said kidnapping the three might be aimed at raising pressure for the release of Israeli airman Ron Arad.

Israel said the three were "terrorist suspects." Foreign Minister David Levy praised the raid as pre-empting attacks.

U.N. envoy Giandomenico Picco was in Tehran Wednesday and diplomats expected him to fly on to Damascus to press for the release of Arad, the only missing Israeli serviceman believed still alive.

"I cannot imagine why the Israelis might think this could help bring Arad back," a diplomat close to the hostage problem told Reuters. "It is much more likely to complicate Picco's efforts."

A Muslim leader said last week Arad was in Syrian hands.

Israel feared Arad might be forgotten after Mr. Picco's success in releasing all the British

and U.S. captives in Lebanon since last August. Two Germans are only remaining Western hostages.

Israel holds Shiite cleric Sheikh Abdul Karim Obied, considered the trump card to win the return of Arad and five other Israelis in Lebanon or their remains.

The three Lebanese were kidnapped by commandos who landed by helicopter on a road near Jibsheet, from where Israeli troops kidnapped Sheikh Obied with two aides on July 28, 1989.

A Western diplomat in Beirut dismissed as nonsense Israel saying that the operation was a purely anti-terrorist action.

"When Israel took Obied it said this was because he was a terrorist. But he was never tried even by a military court. Only later did it admit he was taken as an asset for bargaining."

He noted that Israel said on Tuesday that efforts to bring its missing servicemen home were at a critical stage. "How can they now do this and say it isn't connected?" the diplomat said.

Sheikh Ahmad Taleb, successor to Sheikh Obied as spiritual leader of Jibsheet, condemned the kidnapping as barbaric and vowed: "Our strugglers all over the world will respond violently to this."

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

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PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 Le Chevalier de Labyrinth
18:30 Série Ganche
19:00 News in French
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 American Funniest Home Video
21:00 Exponent
21:30 Life on the Land
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film: "The Great Outdoors"

PRAYER TIMES

04:54 Fajr
05:16 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:26 Dhur
14:12 'Aar
16:36 Maghreb
17:58 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assessments of God Church, Tel. 637285
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Solle Church Tel. 661757
Ternavanta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 623383, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772361
St. Epiphane Church Tel. 771751
Armenian Lutheran Church Tel. 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623824, 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Clouds will appear at various altitudes and there will be a chance for scattered showers of rain. Winds will be southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp. 5 / 13
Aqaba 8 / 20
Dahesh 3 / 14

Jordan Valley

11 / 19

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 12, Aqaba 19, Humidity readings: Amman 70 per cent, Aqaba 33 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Hanna Mansour 748364
Dr. Khaled halayeh 793522
Dr. Mohammad Nabawi 699225
Dr. Tawfiq Qab'lan 623029
Firas pharmacy 661912
Redwood pharmacy 778336
Al Azzam pharmacy 637035
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636780
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsi pharmacy 637660

IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Za'bi (—)
Al Shams' pharmacy (275825)

ZARQA:
Dr. Jihad Mialah (—)
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 611111
Civil Defence Immediate Response 630341
Civil Defence Emergency Rescue Police 199
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 643402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 603800
Police Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone

Repairs: 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int'l Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Human Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642816
Akil Maternity, J. Amn. 642442
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Mallat, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsi 6641714
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mustar Hospital 6672719
The Islamic, Abdali 66612757
Al-Ahl, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajireen 77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77111/26
Army, Marja 89161/115

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)905560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09) 909090

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272725
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

9:00 Damascus (RJ)
9:30 Doha (RJ)
9:30 Cairo (RJ)
9:40 New Delhi (RJ)
9:45 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:20 Colombo (RJ)
10:30 Brunei, London (RJ)
10:45 Beirut (RJ)
11:00 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
11:15 Helsinki, Tripoli (RJ)
12:30 Rome, Beirut (A2)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:30 Paris (AF)
06:15 Beirut (ME)
13:00 Sanaa (Y)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:30 Paris (AF)
06:15 Beirut (ME)
13:00 Sanaa (Y)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in Jds per kg.
Apple 600/300
Banana (Maksum) 300/400
Banana (Maksum) 300/400
Beans 550/650
Cabbage 160/120
Cauliflower 220/170
Cucumbers (large) 120/120
Cucumbers (small) 360/250
Eggplant 280/220
Garlic 800/700
Grapes 300/400
Lemon 180/120
Marrow (large) 160/120
Marrow (small) 350/250
Onion 850/750
Onion (dry) 170/120
Pepper (hot) 320/280
Pepper (sweet) 450/400
Potato 300/250
Sage 600/500
Spinach 220/180
Sweet melon 270/230
Tomatoes 420/380
Watermelon 160/120

هكذا من الأصل

Jordan maintaining child care despite problems — UNICEF

U.N. official assails contradiction of sanctions and needs of Iraqis

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The level of poverty in Jordan is expected to rise in the short-term before the impact of government programmes take effect, according to international and Jordanian officials.

Notwithstanding the fact that a 1990 assessment that 30 per cent of Jordan's population were living below the poverty line was based on two-year old statistics, the figure was "not exaggerated and we expect it to rise in the short term," said Nigel Fisher, deputy regional director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Mr. Fisher was answering questions at a press conference he held to release the 1991 State of the World's Children Report.

Munther Masri, secretary-general of the Ministry of Education who attended the press conference, agreed with Mr. Fisher and said that the government had "taken note of the message" inherent in the UNICEF announcement made in 1990 and was trying to address the situation.

Mr. Masri said the government itself had not carried out a "verification" survey and assessment and, therefore, could not offer any precise updated figures on the level of poverty level in the Kingdom. The "poverty line" in Jordan

was defined in terms of the monthly income that an average family of five spends on food and essential items; JD 89 was set as the minimum in 1990 and experts say that the situation is serious in some of the outlying villages in the south.

Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, addressing the Lower House of Parliament last week, affirmed that poverty and unemployment were two major areas of priority for his government.

Mr. Fisher, who met with Sharif Zeid earlier Thursday to present a copy of the State of the World's Children Report, paid tribute to the attention the Jordanian government gives to the welfare of the Kingdom's children.

He noted that the 1992 draft budget allocated about 25 per cent of expenditure to the social sector — health, education and other services — and pointed out that the allocation was higher than in most other countries.

He said UNICEF was contributing to the Jordanian effort by allocating \$3 million to maintain schools and offer nutritional food to 13,000 families in the south.

Despite the influx of about a quarter million expatriates and families who have returned from Kuwait and other Gulf states, Jordan has managed to maintain its record of bringing down infant mortality rate and

basic health services, Mr. Fisher said.

Prime Minister Sharif Zeid reiterated Jordan's commitment to the resolutions adopted by the 1990 World Summit for Children held in New York and informed UNICEF of the Kingdom's plans to convene a national conference focusing on children, Mr. Fisher said.

Turning to the state of the world's children, Mr. Fisher pointed out that the 1991 report estimates that it would take \$20 billion to ensure the welfare of children on a global level by the year 2000 and that "this represents the military expenses of (all countries) in one week."

Recalling the international response to the UNICEF goal of "universal immunisation for all by 1990," Mr. Fisher expressed confidence that with the proper approach, UNICEF would again be successful in achieving its objective of improving the lot of the world's children.

Mr. Fisher, a Canadian, rejected suggestions that United Nations agencies were under the influence of the United States in the emerging "new world order" and served as political instruments of the U.S.

Mr. Fisher was critical of what he said was a contradiction in the international commitment to the resolutions of

the Summit for Children held in 1990 and the international approach to Iraq, which is under a United Nations-approved sanctions, imposed as a punitive measure following the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

He said humanitarian services to the people of Iraq were adversely affected as a result of the sanctions, despite the exemption of food and medicine from the trade embargo.

In addition, he said, UNICEF has been able to raise only \$25 million out of a called-for \$85 million for its programmes in Iraq.

"We have started a relief and humanitarian programme in Iraq but we are very concerned about the continuity of this programme due to shortages in financial assistance rendered to Iraq's people," he said.

"One of our main concerns is that there is a large unfunded balance for our appeal," he added. "We don't see much cause for optimism there has been a sharp decline in the international community's interest regarding social welfare of the Iraqi people."

"There is, to some extent, a contradiction between the sanctions imposed by the United Nations and the needs of a United Nations humanitarian agency to work in Iraq," he said.

Emphasising the need to "resolve this contradiction so that humanitarian agencies could carry out their jobs properly ... in Iraq," Mr. Fisher also expressed concern over "the effects of the post-war sanctions on Iraqi children."

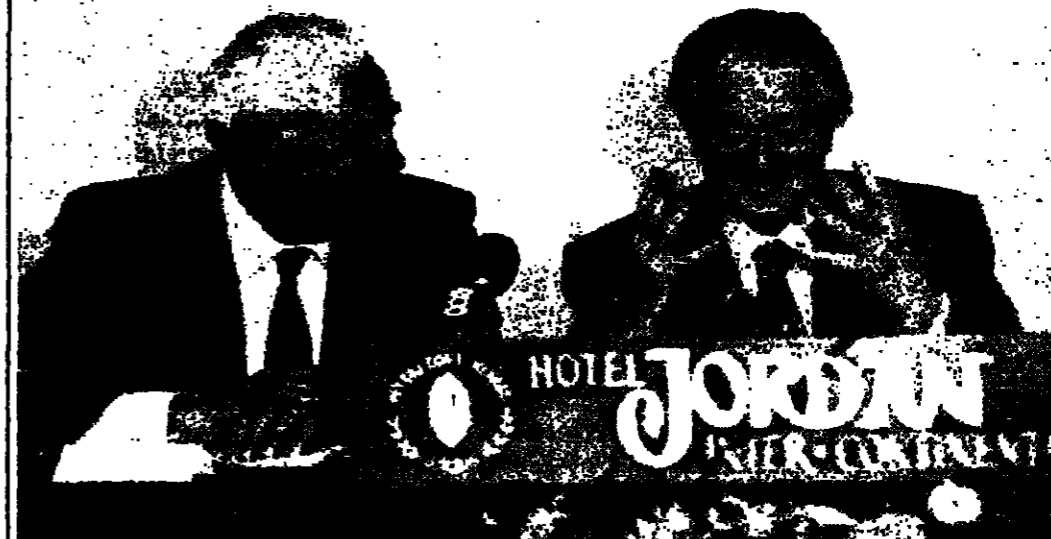
He cited as an example UNICEF's inability to take in some vital needed equipment such as water-pumps into Iraq as a result of the sanctions, despite the fact that UNICEF is an agency of the United Nations.

Citing independent reports which say that hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children are either dead or facing imminent death as a result of the shortages brought about by the continuing trade embargo, Mr. Fisher said:

"We are trying to argue as much as we can that children, women and families should not continue to suffer for political reasons."

He said there was a "serious lacking" in the 1991 State of the World's report in that it fails to mention the "suffering of the Iraqi children as well as the Palestinian children under Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip."

"These two important aspects in the Middle East were seriously lacking in the report and I can't defend UNICEF for (its omission of) these issues," he said.



Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber and French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas held a press conference Thursday at the Hotel Jordan International in Amman. (Photo by Youssef Al Allan)

France will play more active role in peace process, Dumas says

By Serene Halasa

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — France and the European Community will play an important role in the upcoming multilateral talks between Arab states and Israel scheduled next month in Moscow, French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas said Thursday.

Speaking at a joint press conference with Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber, Mr. Dumas said that his country supported the ongoing peace talks in Washington, but regretted "the slow pace" of the talks.

"We have followed the peace talks in Washington and we regret that things are moving slowly but we hope that the next round of talks would break the current stalemate," Mr. Dumas said.

Commenting on the subject, Dr. Abu Jaber said that Jordan has officially asked the French government to play a more active role in the next round of talks.

Mr. Dumas said his country is committed to implementing United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338, which call for Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories. He also

called for granting Palestinians their full rights, especially their right to self-determination.

Mr. Dumas spoke of the good relations between his country and the Kingdom and the important role France sees for Jordan in the peace process, especially in its offering the Palestinians an umbrella delegation to the peace talks.

"Jordan will always have a special role to play in this region as a stable and peaceful element with a stable policy," Mr. Dumas said. "Jordan will also serve as a model to the rest of the Arab World because of the return of democratic life."

During his two-day stay in Jordan, the French foreign minister met with His Majesty King Hussein, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker as well as a number of ministers and other Jordanian officials.

Mr. Dumas expressed his appreciation to King Hussein for conferring upon him the Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order.

The two sides discussed the latest developments in the Middle East peace talks, the European role in the process and the bilateral relations between the two countries.

The two sides also discussed the economic situation in the Kingdom following the Gulf crisis and the effects of the return of about 300,000 expatriates from the Gulf.

Mr. Dumas said his country intends to continue its financial support to the Kingdom and will support the rescheduling of Jordan's debts at the upcoming Paris talks.

As for the possibility of cancelling Jordan's debts, Mr. Dumas said that his country followed certain rules and principles when it considered cancelling a country's debts "and (we) will look into ways of expanding the basis of these rules and principles to include Jordan."

The two sides discussed the U.N. trade embargo on Iraq, in force since that country's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Mr. Dumas said that his country has played an active role in the U.N. to ease the suffering of the Iraqi people by exempting food and medicine from the embargo. He also expressed hope that Iraq will be able to reintegrate itself back into the international community and allow its people to live in peace and stability.

MUSIC REVIEW

William Matthews — classic performance by one of world's best

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A brilliant performance was given by American guitarist William Matthews at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) in Amman Thursday in an event presented by the National Music Conservatory — Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the American Cultural Centre in Amman.

Mr. Matthews delighted the audience with pieces as old as Lays de Narvaez, variations dating back to 1538 — one of the earliest known written compositions — and as new as Michael Gandolfi's (born 1956) Harlequin Sketches, which were written by the composer for Mr. Matthews.

The blending in the programme of extremely different styles and periods pleasantly

introduced with interesting explanations by the artist created a warm atmosphere and a constructive audience-performer contact.

Mr. Matthews played Baroque music — Manuel Ponce — modern, jazzy pieces — Ralph Townner — and mainstream classics — Villa-Lobos, Albeniz and Tarrega. Mr. Matthews ended the recital — before the encore — with the famous Asturias — Leyenda by Isaac Albeniz to an enthusiastic audience.

Some people, however, were disappointed at the remark Matthews made regarding Farid El Atrash transcription of this composition for the oud — Arabic lute or guitar.

The American musician demonstrated not only a superior technique, but also an impressive level of musicality and clarity, a good control of the piano

and forte on an instrument in which dynamics are generally difficult to master. Speed, difficult fingers positions and harmonics didn't seem to be a problem for Mr. Matthews.

One would have liked more accented pull-offs on the first and second strings and more vibrato in lyrical phrases, but this didn't diminish the value of the performance and one can say without being afraid of exaggerating that Mr. Matthews is one of the greatest guitarists alive. He was outstandingly good at the baroque style.

It is interesting to note that more younger people were attending the recital than one can see at other classical events such as chamber music or piano recitals. Is the guitar still as attractive to the young as it was in the sixties and seventies?

Councils to receive money to help pay for appropriated lands

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment has decided to grant municipal and village councils financial grants to help them pay for appropriated land and real estate.

Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs Abdul Razzak Tubeishat made the announcement Thursday at a meeting he chaired at Sahab attended by head of local councils in the Sahab region.

The grant will amount to 25 per cent of the total cost of the appropriated lands and the procedures for offering the grant will begin next week, according to the minister. He said that the ministry has decided to offer the grants in order to ease the burden on the local councils, which have been facing difficulty in carrying out municipal projects.

The government recently allocated JD 3 million to help tidy the local councils over their present difficulties and aims to assist these councils to promote their services to the local communities.

the minister said.

He said that the local councils had accumulated debts totalling JD 1.5 million and the government was keen on helping improve the council's general conditions. The government will also back their efforts to improve services. Various issues facing the local councils like maintaining roads and carrying out organisational plans were reviewed at the meeting.

The minister announced a JD 5,000 grant for the village councils of the Sahab area to finance projects considered of vital importance. The general conditions of the Sahab municipality itself were reviewed and the prospect of granting the council a JD 400,000 loan was examined. Council members said that the loan was needed to pave streets and buy a garbage processing truck.

At the meeting, council members said that a decision was taken assigning a four-dunum plot to serve as a public garden with a special unit for children.

WHAT'S GOING ON

VIDEO

★ Video of a Christmas concert with Pavarotti at the British Council — 6 p.m.

THE PALESTINIAN FILM FESTIVAL

★ Two films entitled "Palestinian Diary" and "Dar wa Dear" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation's Scientific and Cultural Centre — 7:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Art and ornamentation exhibition by Sahab Hadidi at the Royal Cultural Centre.

LECTURE

★ Lecture on Yarmouk University's Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology entitled "Field Projects — National and International" by Dr. Zeidan Kafadi at Goethe Institute — 7 p.m.

HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

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Projects Manager,
The Arab Potash Co., Ltd.,
P.O.Box 1478,
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Merrion Road,
Dublin 4, - Ireland

Fax No.: 962-3-377125/Site
Fax No.: 962-5-674416/Amman H.O.
Telex No.: 21683 Potash Jo.
Tel. No.: 665165/6 - Amman
665116 or 03-377121/3 - Site

Fax No.: 353-1-2695497
Telex No.: 30295 JCBS-EI
Tel. No.: 353-1-2695666

Submission of tenders should not be later than 12:00 noon, February 04, 1992.

A.Y. Ensour,
Managing Director,
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Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

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Timely reminder

IN HIS address to a group of graduating senior army officers Thursday, His Majesty King Hussein rejected outright Israel's insistence on trading peace only for peace and its devious reconstruction of the formula of land for peace. Under either formulation, the King said, Israel is holding an unacceptable position that it owns the occupied Arab territories and that if the suggested tradeoff fails for one reason or another, it will hold to these territories as a matter of right. This is a timely Jordanian intervention in the peace process, suspended for the time being after Israel placed one hurdle after another in its path.

Of the two Israeli propositions, its offer of peace for peace insinuates that it harbours aggressive designs on the Arab Order and that it will not abandon such designs unless the concerned Arab parties relinquished their sovereignty and claim for the territories that Israel occupied since 1967. Jordan, the King warned, is not seeking peace at any price. Rather, it will insist on the legitimate interpretation of the formula of peace for land as lawfully expressed in U.N. Security Council resolution 242. The crux of the issue for Jordan and for the rest of the Arab parties, therefore, is clearly the future and fate of the Arab territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 war. In other words, what the King is telling friend and foe alike is that without effective Israeli withdrawal from the Arab lands occupied in that war, there can be no peace no matter how tortuous and difficult is the ongoing peace process could be.

For that purpose and goal, Jordan's steadfastness is within the grasp of Jordanians, the King said. For one thing, the King reminded his military audience and beyond them the entire peoples and governments of the region that the country will remain strong and proud in spite of all the negative developments that took place in the Arab World. It is worthwhile noting that the King has viewed the country's ultimate security and stability as a principal element in its carefully nurtured democratic process. This article of faith in the democratisation process augurs well for the future of the Kingdom and pulls the rug from under the feet of those who still think that democracy in Jordan can be derailed. As for its economic woes and difficulties, King Hussein has aptly reminded the country that men and nations do not live by bread alone but rather by higher ideals and motivations that would make their steadfastness that much more impregnable.

Such timely and solemn reminders about where Jordan really stands on the issue of war and peace in the Middle East and the other fundamental domestic concerns serve to promote the peace process because they eliminate all illusions and false hopes that others may entertain about the country's ultimate bargaining posture. Now that the Washington peace talks have ended in an apparent deadlock on practically all fronts, it is prudent to sound the alarm, before the third round of talks that would resume in the U.S. capital on Jan. 7, that there are principles that are constant and invariable in the legal and political framework of the peace process that Jordan would never abandon no matter how intransigent are the foes or unsympathetic and misunderstanding are some brothers.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

NOW THAT the U.N. General Assembly has rescinded a 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism, the Arabs should seek a U.N. General Assembly resolution ordering Israel to halt its settlement programmes in the occupied Arab lands, said Al Ra'i daily. The paper said that the Arabs hope that a halt of Jewish settlements can contribute most positively to the establishment of real peace in the Middle East. Also, following the aborted peace talks in Washington, for which both the United States and Israel are held responsible, the U.S. administration should open the door for the U.N. Security Council resolutions to be implemented by a decision from the world organisation, the paper called. It said that by assuming absolute and sole responsibility for the Arab-Israeli talks, the U.S. rendered the U.N. ineffective and impotent vis-a-vis the imposition of the world community's will and the implementation of Security Council resolutions. The United States had excluded the European Community and the United Nations from any meaningful effort aimed at bringing about peace through the implementation of Security Council resolution that call for an end to Israel's occupation of Arab land, and so contributed to the collapse of the Middle East negotiations, the paper added. It said that the Israelis, with their intransigent position and their determination to get peace and retain the occupied territory, made it impossible for any progress in the peace parity. The paper said only an internationally concerted action can force Israel to comply with the United Nations resolutions and bring peace to the region.

A guest columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily called attention to the status of women in the Jordanian society noting that women are deprived of their basic rights, like the right to get a passport without any interference on the part of her father, brother or husband. Hassan Halaseh referred to Parliament members speeches during the vote of confidence in the new government and said they all discussed politics and repeated demands for reform and discussed the Middle East process except for one deputy Dhib Marji who demanded that the Council of Ministers should include women members. How can a woman reach the position of minister if her basic rights are not fulfilled? asked the writer. Only with the approval of a man in the family can a woman, even if she is 60 years old, obtain a passport for herself and move about freely, the writer added. She demanded that this basic right be given to Jordanian women who reach 21 years of age without having to obtain a written approval of the man of the family before women can be expected to fill a ministerial portfolio in Jordan.

Israel, U.S. complacent in denial of Palestinian rights

By Lami K. Andoni

THE impasse over the status of Israeli-Palestinian talks, which led to the failure of the second round of Arab-Israeli talks in Washington this week, reinforces two long-held assumptions about the Israeli attitude and the American role:

— First, that Israel is not ready to address the issue of a separate Palestinian national identity and will do anything to keep it away from the negotiations agenda.

— Second, that the U.S. is not willing to endorse an agenda that includes the Palestinian people's right to self-determination even if that meant the obstruction of peace talks.

Although the Israeli refusal to recognise a Palestinian national identity has been repeated again and again, the Israeli refusal to talk to the Palestinian side (in the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation) as a separate team revealed very alarming aspects of the Israeli political thinking.

To start with, the Israeli decision-makers, and not only extremist Jewish zealots, are trying to reinforce, through negotiations, their claims that the Palestinians, at best, are part of Jordan. In other words that Jordan represents "the Palestinian community which lives" in the occupied territories. This assumption, that the Israeli negotiators are trying to establish as fact, will pave the way for reinforcing the claims that Jordan is the substitute homeland for the Palestinians.

In practical terms, the Israelis are seeking to push the negotiations in a direction that would impose on the Arab parties, especially Jordan, the idea that the whole issue of Palestinians under occupation can be settled through a peace treaty and arrangements with Jordan. This scenario might involve the revival of proposals

for the "condominium" arrangement, i.e. sharing the administration of the occupied territories with Jordan, till the actual enforcement of Jordan as the substitute homeland for Palestinians.

Aware of this implicit danger, Jordan has been firm in its rejection to be dragged by Israel to talk on behalf of the Palestinians and insisted on the two-track approach — involving Arab-Israeli talks and Israeli-Palestinian talks.

Israel's consistent policy of denying the existence of a Palestinian national identity reveals two important components of Israeli political thinking:

— Israeli leaders believe, as they have repeated again and again, that a Palestinian national identity is the antithesis of the Israeli identity. Therefore, the attainment of Palestinian national rights is the beginning of the end of the Israeli identity, according to the Israeli thinking.

— That an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, and any expression of the Palestinian national identity, might raise questions about the very existence of Israel. (This argument is often cited by Israeli extremists who argue that the peace talks and an Israeli territorial compromise is the beginning of the end for Israel.)

Such thinking, or more accurately paranoia, explains to a great extent Israel's euphoric celebration of the repeal of the 1975 United Nations resolution that Zionism is a form of racism. For even though the condemnation of Zionism, specifically the practices of the state of Israel, did not put an end to racism and discrimination exercised by Israel, it undermined the Jewish state's central moral argument for the continuation of its occupation and expansionism.

This argument, which consti-

tutes one of the main tenets of Zionist political thought as endorsed by Israeli leaders, is based on the claim that the Jews in the world are entitled to a separate homeland "for the Jews and only for the Jews."

To attain and preserve this goal, all means have been deemed justifiable since the aim is "to protect the Jews of the world from discrimination and persecution."

Seen in that context, the repeal of the U.N. condemnation of Zionism, will not only provide a moral boost for discriminatory policy — as it won international acceptance — but will strengthen the Israeli negotiating position.

In a way, the repeal of the 1975 resolution seems to serve Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's attempts to establish "the historic and religious Israeli claim to the whole of the land of Palestine, instead of international legality, as the term of reference to the negotiations with the Arabs."

But this important Israeli triumph will by no means solve Israel's historic dilemma. Israel, after all, cannot escape infinitely from facing the fact that its own legitimacy is derived from a United Nations resolution — Resolution 181 — which involves the establishment of two states, Arab and Jewish, in the land of Palestine.

The most alarming element in this recent episode however, is not the Israeli position, but the American attitude which has practically helped Israel to evade confronting the United Nations resolutions.

To begin with, the fervish U.S. campaign to repeal the United Nations resolution on Zionism has only reinforced suspicions and previously held conclusions in the Arab World that Washington is being selective in its dealing with the United Nations resolu-

tions. Washington has succeeded to block any attempt to accompany the repeal of the resolution by any practical steps to curb the racial policies practised by Israel towards the Palestinians — thus practically giving a green light to Israel to pursue such policies.

Moreover, Washington's attitude indicates that one of the main features of America's new world order is not only selectivity in the implementation of United Nations resolutions, but that these resolutions can be repealed if they do not suit the interests of Washington and its allies.

This assumption raises many serious questions about Washington's adherence to other United Nations resolutions, including the very ones that the U.S. has insisted on as being the basis for the current Arab-Israeli peace talks — i.e. 242 and 338.

The U.S. claim that the repeal of United Nations Resolution 3379 will actually facilitate the peace talks seems unjustifiable if only because of the Israeli disregard for the United Nations resolutions as well as the rules laid down by the co-sponsors of the peace talks (especially by the U.S.).

For why should Israel bother about showing respect for either United Nations resolutions or the rules of the peace talks, if the U.S. seems ready to interfere to repeal resolutions unacceptable to Israel and give a blind eye to Israeli violations of the ground rules of the peace negotiations?

American claims that the U.S. is deliberately keeping away from the talks to allow the two sides to solve their problems on their own has been undermined by its vigorous campaign to repeal Resolution 3379, and by its refraining from blaming Israel for delaying the talks.

More significantly, the U.S.

has also been very selective in its commitment to the very ground rules it laid down. While the U.S. was firm in its refusal to grant entry visas to Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials and did not hesitate to use its leverage as the host of the bilateral peace talks to ensure the exclusion of the PLO, it did not show the same resolve in dealing with Israel's boycott of the bilateral talks fixed by the co-sponsors, and with Israel's evasion of the dual track approach.

The American reluctance or unwillingness to exert pressure on Israel to abide by the rules, contradicts its assertions, in the letters of assurances delivered to the Arab parties, that it will not allow any party to impede or obstruct the process.

The U.S. silence on the Israeli refusal to adhere to the two-track approach also appears to contravene its commitment to the two-track approach as was contained in the letters of invitation it addressed to the parties involved in the Washington talks.

The American attitude throughout the Washington talks has reinforced Arab, and particularly Palestinian suspicions that the U.S. exclusion of the PLO aimed, in the first place, at striking out the Palestinian national rights from the negotiations agenda.

Furthermore, one cannot but doubt that the U.S. selectivity in its commitment, let alone enforcement, of the ground rules of the talks, is practically undermining the Arab negotiating position and serving the Israeli tactic of using the facts it creates on the ground to extract Arab concessions at the negotiating table.

U.S. President George Bush's statements that the Israeli settlements are an obstacle to peace, but that the Arabs should take measures — like ending Arab

economic embargo against Israel — to clear the atmosphere, only substantiate such conclusions.

Mr. Bush is effectively opening the two issues, ignoring the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories by choosing to forget that the Arab boycott was a result of reaction to Israeli occupation of Arab land.

At the beginning of 1991, Mr. Bush had led an international alliance, in the name of the United Nations, to destroy Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. The U.S. refuses to lift the sanctions against the Iraqi people, despite the "liberation" of Kuwait, the death and infliction of tremendous suffering on Iraq.

The Arabs' economic boycott of Israel cannot be compared to its effect or magnitude with the embargo the U.N. imposed on Iraq. The Arab boycott is a temporary measure pending a peaceful solution — and not the destruction of Israel — that ends an end of the Israeli occupation.

American logic, as put forward by Mr. Bush, will only promote the Israeli goal of securing normalisation of relations with the Arab World without solving the Palestinian problem.

The Palestinian delegates to the peace talks repeatedly remind the world that they are negotiating with Israel while their people and families are held hostage under Israeli occupation.

Mr. Bush, it seems, is trying to remind us that power and an international law dictates the rules, especially after the military defeat of Iraq. This logic does not only undermine the U.S. credibility as an even-handed mediator, but, more significantly, torpedoes the very argument for peaceful negotiations.

In short, negotiations cannot be held at gun point, and if they are, their results are short lasting.

The week in print

Israel does not care to comply with the international legitimacy

JORDANIAN papers last week gave prominence to the aborted peace talks in Washington, the latest U.N. General Assembly resolution, the resolutions of the Islamic summit in Dakar, the situation in the Soviet Union as well as a host of domestic issues.

Under the title of wasting time at Washington's negotiations, a columnist in Al Ra'i said that because Israel was forced to attend the Washington peace talks it decided from the start to do all it can to abort the negotiations and waste other parties' time and efforts.

Mahmoud Shuqair said Israel has succeeded in aborting the talks through its delegation's behaviour in Washington, through an escalation of repressive measures against the Palestinians and through statements by its own officials and leaders.

Difference in views between the Jordanian and Palestinian side and Israel is not over procedures, as people might think, but it is rather over substance, according to Salameh Ekour in Sawt Al Shaab.

The writer said that by refusing to hold separate talks with the Palestinians, Israel was showing the world, as well as the Arabs and the Americans, that it by no means can recognise the rights of the Palestinian in a separate homeland. By insisting that the Jordanians and the Palestinians form one delegation, Israel is trying to prove that the Palestinians have Jordan as their homeland, the writer added.

Fakhr Saleh, a columnist in Al Dustour, accused the United States of remaining passive during the negotiations covering up for Israel's intransigent stand and its violation of the agreements on holding the negotiations.

The writer said that against this background, the Arab negotiators are acting with no real coordination and are backed by a weak Arab Nation, in

total disarray, something which led to the total collapse of the Washington talks.

Sawt Al Shaab daily said in an editorial that unless the United States steps in and gives momentum to the peace talks nothing can be achieved. The paper said that it is clear that the Israelis are not concerned with complying with the rule of the international legitimacy unless they are forced to do that by the world community.

Most columns and editorials tackled the recent cancellation of a General Assembly Resolution equating Zionism with racism. By rescinding its own resolution, the General Assembly could, if the U.S. master so desires, issue another resolution cancelling the General Assembly's existence, said Ahmad Mialeh in Al Ra'i.

The writer said that by taking this unprecedented step, the United Nations has embarked on the final stage of its own existence.

In the view of Bader Abdul Haq, a columnist in Al Ra'i, Zionism has not changed its colour to justify a reward from the United Nations. The writer said that the Zionists have been occupying Palestinian land for a quarter of a century, treating the Arabs inhumanly and launching aggression on others, in addition to closely cooperating with the racist regime on South Africa.

A columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily sarcastically asked why the General Assembly does not cancel U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 which calls on Israel to withdraw from occupied lands.

Ahmad Dhiban said that the United States, which ordered the General Assembly to rescind its own 1975 resolution about Zionism, could at any time order the cancellation of Resolution 242 because it harms the interests of its strategic ally. Indeed, said the writer, cancelling 242 at the Security Council would take less efforts since the decision could come from the council.

itself where there are only 15 delegates, unlike the General Assembly.

Under the title "mabrouk (congratulations) to Zionism," Mazen Hammad, who writes for Al Dustour, said that the General Assembly, under the orders of the United States, has rewarded Israel for its atrocities and its racist regime and racist practices against the Palestinians.

The writer said that the reward came 15 years after it has been established that the Zionists are killing Arabs, building settlements on their lands and launching continued aggression on its neighbours.

The resolutions of the Islamic summit in Dakar drew the attention of several writers. With Saleman Al Barnawi, in Sawt Al Shaab, describing them as means for massacring the Palestinian and Iraqi people. The Islamic summit offered a good service to the Americans who are intent on killing the Iraqis and the Palestinians. The worst thing about the situation is that the American objective is being implemented through Muslims, the writer said.

The Dakar summit has decided to erase the call for a holy war (jihad) from the dictionary of Muslims and to maintain the current embargo on the Iraqi people so that most of them would die, said Salameh Ekour in Sawt Al Shaab.

The Arabs and Muslims had thought that by convening the Islamic summit, the leaders of the Islamic Nation would achieve reconciliation and work towards ending the sufferings of their brothers and sisters in Iraq, said the writer. But it turned out that the summit was an arena for settling scores, by offering more services to Israel and the United States, he said.

Taber Al Udwan contrasted the position of Muslims at Dakar and that of Europeans at Maastricht. Writing in Al Dustour, the writer said that while the Europeans, who had

been involved in conflicts for ages, are patching differences and forging unity, the Arabs and Muslims proved, at the Dakar conference, that they are determined to remain in disarray and weak, unable to deal with matters of common interest.

Referring to the downfall of Mikhail Gorbachev, Ahmad Salameh said that a prophecy by British novelist George Orwell, 46 years ago, has finally come true. The writer said that in his novel "Animal Farm," Orwell had predicted the collapse of communism and the return of capitalism, a prophecy which Mr. Gorbachev, backed by the West, has achieved.

If anything, Mr. Gorbachev has succeeded in dismantling the Soviet Union and rendering the Soviet people hungry, begging the West for food, said Hani Al Dahleh in Al Ra'i daily. The writer said that after being the second world power, the Soviet Union is now degraded and left to disintegrate to serve the common interests of the Western nations.

Arafat Hijazi, a writer in Sawt Al Shaab, said that the Arab World's situation is pitiable due to the persisting differences among its leaders, but the situation in the Soviet Union is far more worse. The writer said that the Russians are now more or less a tool in the hands of the United States after losing their unity and allowing the Americans to steer their future.

Turning to local issues, a writer in Al Dustour said that Parliament members' speeches during the vote of confidence session did not offer the listeners anything new.

Salah Al Qallab said that the speeches were more or less a reminder of the pattern in the Soviet Union and other communist countries in the 1960s, which led to the downfall of the regimes. The writer said that Jordanians wanted discussions of real issues, but the deputies chose to follow the same pattern of unproductive speeches.

Looking uneasily around world, U.S. sees fascism reviving

By Alan Elsner
Reuter

WASHINGTON — Anxiously surveying a world in turmoil, American policy-makers and intellectuals fear the resurrection of an old and dreaded enemy — fascism.

They see it stirring in the warring republics of Yugoslavia, in the separatist movement campaigning to detach Slovakia from Czechoslovakia and in the growing, vociferous anti-immigrant and anti-foreigner movements in Germany, Austria, France and elsewhere in Europe.

They even see it in their own backyard in the exploits of former Ku Klux Klan and American Nazi leader David Duke, now running for president after winning a majority of white votes in his unsuccessful bid to become governor of Louisiana.

Worst of all, they see with dread the shadow of a fascist threat in the republics of the disintegrating Soviet Union.

"Great empires rarely go quietly into extinction," U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said earlier this month.

"No one can dismiss the possibility that darker political forces lurk in the wings, representing the remnants of Stalinism or the birth of nationalist extremism or even fascism," he said.

So far, the threat in the Soviet Union is just that — a threat. But scholars say fascism is very much out in the open in other parts of Europe, both East and West.

"Elements of the old rhetoric of fascism and anti-Semitism have thawed out from the deep freeze of the cold war like a woolly mammoth that was buried in ice," said Alan Kraut, a history professor at the American University in Washington.

"Fascism never vanished. It was suppressed by communism and now it is coming out of the woodwork. The encouraging thing is that the world has changed and most people recognise it for what it is," he said.

Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Los Angeles, said fascist ideas, long discredited because of World War II and the Nazi annihilation of six million Jews, were becoming acceptable and even fashionable in some places.

"I'm not saying the fourth Reich is imminent. But the world needs to be alert to the dangers," Mr. Hier said.

"Fascism has adapted itself to the times. It is less explicit. It is no longer an age of black shirts

and Swastikas. But it is prevalent everywhere."

Mr. Hier said there was a tendency in countries throwing off the Soviet yoke to see anybody who had been anti-communist as a hero.

The newly independent state of Lithuania, for example, stirred the anger of Jews in the United States and elsewhere when it was reported to be rehabilitating convicted Nazi war criminals as Lithuanian patriots.

The Lithuanian government responded to a flood of complaints by promising to halt the practice.

"The human mind is losing consciousness of Auschwitz," said Mr. Hier, referring to the Nazi concentration camp where more than a million people perished. "We have a global assault on the meaning of the holocaust."

Robert Hayden, an expert on Yugoslavia at the University of Pittsburgh, detects explicit fascist ideology on both sides of the bitter ethnic civil war raging there.

"There are manifestations of a chauvinistic nationalism that resembles most closely that of central Europe in the 1930s and of such neo-fascist movements as the National Front in present-day France," Mr. Hayden said.

A U.S. State Department official noted that both Croatia and Slovakia enjoyed their only brief taste of national independence as Nazi puppet states.

Some present-day nationalists hark back to those states and revere the Nazi collaborators who established them as heroes and founding fathers.

Just as in the 1930s, extremism and chauvinism breed on economic hardship. The nations of the West, including the United States, are caught in the grip of a recession that is causing widespread hardship among people used to affluence.

The peoples of Central and Eastern Europe have it much worse. Their economies were ruined by 40 years of communist rule and the transition to the market system is taking place in an unfavourable world economic climate.

"The roots of democracy are shallow and fragile, and they could easily be destroyed by economic misery, sectarian hostility or regional conflict," said CIA Director Robert Gates in testimony to Congress last week.

"History is not over. It simply has been frozen and now it is thawing with a vengeance. Americans ignore at their peril."

هَذَا مِنْ الْأَصْلِ

Recession makes Christmas in Europe cheerless

By Barry May
Reuter

LONDON — In parts of the prosperous West, recession and retrenchment cast gloom over the season of good will and free spending.

In the impoverished East, shortages and sharply rising prices bring home the harsh realities of the shift from central control to a market economy.

For many Europeans, this winter, it's a cheerless Christmas. Despite big discounts and early sales campaigns, many cash registers aren't ringing so loudly or so often this year.

Some retailers fear 1991 will be the Christmas that never was.

In Britain, so-called nation of shopkeepers, a pre-Christmas firebomb offensive by the guerrilla Irish Republican Army (IRA) on stores and other targets has dampened already sluggish sales by scaring people away from major shopping centres.

Business analysts say the chaos could cost shops and offices in London tens of millions of pounds (dollars) in lost business.

"The IRA have made it absolutely clear they are intent on waging a campaign of economic disruption and it is working quite well. This is an absolute disaster for retailers especially," said Ian Stevenson of investment house Salomon Brothers.

Big price cuts do not usually emerge until the January stock clearance sales but retailers are already slashing prices by up to 25 per cent.

"Retailers report that sales remain above the levels seen in the months immediately after the Gulf war but volumes remain poor for the time of year," says Nigel Whittaker of the Confederation of British Industry.

German Christmas sales are unlikely to reach levels achieved last year when pent-up demand in East Germany and an economic boom in the West boosted retail turnover to record highs, major retailers say.

Although consumer appetite has remained unabated in the former communist region, people in the West have become more careful following tax increases in July.

"It will not be better than last year when Christmas sales went extraordinary well," said a spokesman at Karstadt AG, Germany's largest retail chain.

"The beginning of West German Christmas sales was worse than expected," said Helene Heger, spokeswoman at Herten AG. "But altogether it will end very satisfactorily. Demand in Eastern Germany is still very strong."

Many East Germans, who went shopping in the West last year, are staying in their hometowns this year. Major retailers have invested heavily to modernise formerly state-owned department stores in the East.

People in both parts of Germany are increasingly turning to quality goods, despite lower disposable income.

Winter clothing is a particularly popular gift in Eastern Germany,

while home electronics such as computers, videos or wireless telephones, are favourites in the West.

In Paris, a spokeswoman said La Samaritaine department store expects pre-Christmas sales to be up five per cent from 1990.

Compact disc sales have leaped 50 per cent from last year, and along with portable and wireless telephones, joined the ranks of favourite family gifts, said Florise Grimaud.

But perfume and cosmetics are still the best sellers, with jewellery close behind.

Toy sales at La Samaritaine are down two to three per cent from 1990, but Ms. Grimaud expected them to gain ground during the last pre-Christmas weekend.

"There are certain sectors which are a bit late in getting off the ground, but I think that during the last weekend, when we'll stay open on Sunday, and the two days right before Christmas, they'll catch up," she said.

For Italians, Christmas promises to be a little more austere this year, as a tough economic climate forces consumers to cut back on spending and switch to cheaper gifts.

Sales of jewellery, furs and perfume — the traditional favourites in fashion-conscious Italy — are all down on last year, by as much as 40 per cent, retailers say.

"The only things that seem to be doing well this Christmas are food products, but on all the rest losses are considerable," said Pietro Alfonsi, secretary general of Confindustria, Italy's retailers' association.

The jewellers' demise could prove to be the salvation of authors and publishers. "It seems that in these precarious times people have rediscovered the pleasure of reading and giving books," he said.

Swiss retailers who have been expecting a marked slowdown in spending say traditional Christmas business is booming in all sectors and betrays no sign of recession.

But they detect a shift of emphasis towards better quality, more durable goods and towards brand-name articles, even if these are more expensive, perhaps because they retain value and can be seen as a hedge against inflation.

Sales of watches, jewellery and perfume are especially good. Gimmicky presents are out.

"Things aren't so bad that people are going to let their Christmas be spoilt," said Fredi Fehr, director at Zurich department store Vilan.

Swedes stocking up on hams, compact disc players and computers for their children are expected to boost retail spending by two per cent after inflation from last year's depressed levels, said Rolf Karp of the Swedish Wholesale and Retail Research Institute.

"It's the only part of the Swedish economy that's still going strong," he said.

Electronic goods of all sorts are hot sellers this year as falling

prices put them within reach of more shoppers.

In addition, Sweden, which has lagged behind the United States and Britain in buying compact disc players, is beginning to acquire the habit, he said.

The institute forecasts Christmas sales of up to 60,000 compact disc players and two million compact discs — one for every fourth Swede.

Computers for pre-school children and video games for older kids, satin pyjamas for women and synthetic fleece sweaters are also big sellers, he said.

On top of gift shopping, Swedes also spend heavily on hams and other traditional foods for holiday feasts. Food accounts for 50 per cent of holiday spending, Mr. Karp said.

Danish retailers expect gifts to be more romantic this year with clothing very popular again, in contrast to last year's concentration on more practical things for the home. To help, purchase tax on perfume is lower.

Supplies in the shops of Eastern Europe, already suffering its worst recession since the 1930s, are much better than they were under communism.

But prices put them out of the reach of many people and the recession has led to unemployment figures long forgotten during communist rule.

In Albania, Europe's poorest state, celebrations are the last thing on the minds of the country's hungry, freezing and weary population of three million as they struggle free from four de-

CADES of despotic Stalinist rule. An official ban on religion was lifted last year but Christmas is unlikely to be a happy occasion.

Weeks of political crisis, unusually bitter weather and recent widespread looting of food stores have soured the season of good will.

In Paris Tirana shops have been looted and burned.

A fish shop at the entrance to the city's free-price market is a charred hulk. Across the road, a newly-opened Italian grocery shop which stocks imported goods beyond the reach of most people is fortified with rows of iron bars.

Police with orders to shoot accompany army trucks distributing bread to protect them from hungry mobs.

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Palestinians press for strong U.S. role

(Continued from page 1)

Mid-east regional cooperation talks at the end of January. He had asked the Soviets whether they wanted the talks moved but they declined.

Mr. Bush also indicated he was disappointed with the amount of time devoted to the question of where and when to meet next in the talks' other two fronts — Syrian-Israeli and Israeli-Lebanese.

The next round of direct talks

is tentatively planned for Jan. 7. Israel would like it moved to the Middle East but appears resigned to accept the Arab demand for Washington. "I think my government would not make the place or the venue an issue which would prevent the continuation of the talks," said Mr. Shoval.

He said the Israelis had exchanged telephone numbers with the Palestinians in order to establish direct contacts.

Jordan: Deadlock will be removed

(Continued from page 1)

Palestinian people restore their legitimate right to self-determination," he said.

Dr. Abu Jaber stressed the need for drawing the world attention that the occupied territories are Arab lands and represent a historical Arab right. He said that

there was no room for any compromise on the land.

"The Arabs' understanding of this principle is based on their legitimate demand for their inalienable right in their land in return for ending the state of war and establishing a just and comprehensive peace," he said.

Sabbah calls for patience in talks

(Continued from page 1)

patient." In a written statement, Archbishop Sabbah saw a hopeful sign in the olive branches recently given to Israeli soldiers by Palestinian youths.

"But the occupation has not ended, nor the acts of resistance," he said. "Our olive branch is telling our adversary that peace is possible."

Archbishop Sabbah said the special status he wanted for Jerusalem need not be the international rule recommended in the 1947 U.N. resolution that urged the creation of both Jewish and Arab states in then British-ruled

Palestine. He said that spiritually, Jerusalem "belongs to the three major creeds — Judaism, Islam and Christianity."

"Therefore, Jerusalem must be governed according to a very special status in which the power must be shared by all these people," he said.

"It is not necessary to be international, it could be governed by the locals," he said. "But the status must ... be special, it must be shared by ... all the believers of the world."

Israel has repeatedly rejected sharing power in Jerusalem.

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JORDAN BASKETBALL ROUNDUP

By Aileen Bannayan

Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — Al Hussein nearly put an end to Al Watani's hopes of improving their standing in the first division basketball championship as they scored an impressive 109-73 victory in their match played Thursday at Al Hassan Sports City in Irbid.

Al Hussein ended the first half to their advantage 40-34. Al Watani were hampered by many personal fouls which Al Hussein took advantage of by applying a tight defence to win the match by a big difference. Commenting on the match in a statement to the Jordan Times Al Hussein's head coach Ghaith Al Najjar said: "As one can tell from the result, the first half was quite good. But we missed two key players who were out by five personal fouls at the beginning of the second half. This affected us a lot."

"I can frankly say that my team played with no enthusiasm or determination whatsoever Najjar said, adding "that was caused by many reasons."

"The way the championship was organised this season (in terms of grouping the eight teams after an elimination round) affected us tremendously. We lost to Al Jazireh by a three point difference and then lost to Al Jalil and we were immediately out of the top four. We should have had the chance to play these teams again. That would have been a fair elimination," said Najjar.

In Thursday's other match Al Ashrafiah scored a close 49-46 win over Al Karak. The first half ending at the low score of 29-17.

In another of this week's matches played Wednesday in Irbid, Al Orthodoxy continued their powerful displays as they

beat Al Jalil 93-57.

Al Orthodoxy played at their own pace while minimising their foes' scoring as they won the first half 47-29.

Al Jalil's players could not stop Al Orthodoxy, led by Murad Barakat, from expanding the difference as they won the match.

Earlier in the week, Al Hussein's experience, fullcourt man-to-man defence and fast play enabled them to beat Al Ashrafiah 113-72 the first half ending 57-34.

In a moderate match, Al Watani beat bottom of the division Al Karak 72-52, the first half ending 32-24.

On Sunday Al Karak will play Al Hussein and Al Ashrafiah will play Al Watani. On Wednesday Al Hussein plays Al Ashrafiah and Al Watani meets Al Karak in matches that will certainly decide the two teams that will be relegated to the second division.

Only 30 per cent expected to finish Paris-Cape Town Motor Rally

PARIS (R) — Only 30 per cent of the 343 starters will finish the world's longest and toughest motor rally from Paris to Cape Town, organisers forecast Friday.

The 14th edition of the rally, which used to run from Paris to Dakar, starts Monday and is due to finish in South Africa after 25 days covering over 12,400 kms of desert, savannah, equatorial forest and veldt.

Among the competitors is crippled former Formula One Grand Prix driver Clay Regazzoni of Switzerland, runner-up in the 1974 World Drivers' Championship.

Regazzoni, paralysed in a crash at Long Beach in 1980 and confined to a wheelchair, will take part in a Mercedes.

Chief organiser Gilbert Sabine, father of the late creator of the rally Thierry Sabine, took the

opportunity of South Africa's emergence from the sporting wilderness to alter the itinerary.

Worsening political conditions have made West Africa too dangerous. A French truck driver was shot dead in Mali last January.

"Now is the perfect time to change. When you look at the map of Africa, it is logical to go from top to bottom," he said.

"But to organise the event has been a challenge to logic, involving more countries and a crazy challenge."

The car entries, headed by four times Paris-Dakar winner Ari Vatanen of Finland, number 143. There are also 99 motorcycles and 101 trucks.

The new route enters Africa through Libya, where Colonel Muammar Qadhafi has personally guaranteed the safety of com-

petitors, and by-passes troubled Zaire with a 25-hour sea voyage.

Vatanen along with twice winner and six-times Le Mans 24 hours champion Jacky Ickx of Belgium and 1979 world rallying champion Bjorn Waldegaard of Sweden will be driving three of the five Citroen ZXs entered.

Citroen won last year's Paris-Dakar but suffered a set-back in October when Ickx's co-driver Christian Tarrin was killed in a fiery crash during the Pharaohs Desert Rally in Egypt.

"The tragedy left me with an enormous emotional scar and it has not been easy to get through the weeks since," Ickx said. "But I have chosen to continue desert racing as this is now my life."

Mitsubishi, entering five factory Pajeros, are hoping to derive Citroen of the double.

Al Wihdat beats Al Faisali 2-1

AMMAN (J.T.) — A crowd of over 18,000 football fans witnessed Al Wihdat's 2-1 victory over Al Faisali in the semifinals of the Jordan Cup competition.

Jiryes Tadros scored Al Faisali's only goal in the 49th minute of the match. Al Wihdat equalised with a superb header from Talal Rabaia in the 75th minute.

The match went into extra time, the first half of which ended with no change in the score. Al Wihdat's Hisham Abdul Mun'em scored his team's winning goal in

the 8th minute of the second half of the extra time.

Al Wihdat will now meet the

winner of the Ramtha-Ahli match on Jan. 3 in the final of the Jordan Cup competition.

Al Ramtha draws in Iran

AMMAN (J.T.) — Al Ramtha Friday came a step closer to securing their place in the semifinals of the Asian Clubs Championship.

In the first leg of their quarter-final match Al Ramtha drew 1-1

with Moivan of Iran. Mouaffaq Abu Hudeib scored Al Ramtha's equalising goal.

The second leg of the quarter-finals will be played at Al Hassan Sports City in Irbid on Dec. 27.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY DECEMBER 21, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Richter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: The Lunar Eclipse and Full Moon in Gemini offers possibilities for meditation and studying a philosophy of life under which to operate in the abundant days ahead. Keep communication lines open.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Whatever you would like to do that does require behind the scenes studies, discussions and other activities can produce helpful results now.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Your devotion to your friends should be expressed now instead of just sitting in that comfortable chair and doing strictly personal things.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Take some time out to make sure that you do handle those worldly situations in such a condition that you get even more respect and assistance from prominent persons.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Whatever brings you a new inspiration to gain your aspirations is very good for you now so make a point to show you are the one who is open minded.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Look into those various and sundry outlets by which you are able to find the ways and means by which to please those who expect a great deal from you.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You are able now to contact

partners and all other associates to get them to have a better understanding what you have in mind in joint venture with them.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Decide now how you want to serve and help those who are close to you and whom you want to assist and schedule a plan whereby you can do so.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) This is your moment to really enjoy yourself so after periods of your choice get out and off and show your lighter side to congenial companions.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is your moment to find the right answers to whatever family problems are about you so be still for a while and listen to what your family has to say.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Listen to that wise and sage person who can give you the answers that help you most in your life and then be off to visit with compatible pals.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is your moment to show you do value those who give you practical suggestion to increase your abundance of more of this world's goods.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Now you certainly are able to gain the good will of those personal contacts that mean a great deal to you so ask them what they would like you to do.

Italy to give Baggio striker's role

FOGGIA, Italy (R) — Roberto Baggio of Juventus is expected to return in a striking role as Italy seek to clinch second place in their group when they meet Cyprus in a European Soccer Championship qualifier Saturday.

The Soviet Union have won Group 3 but the European Football Union (UEFA) said this week the team finishing second would go to the finals in Sweden next June if political upheaval prevented the Soviets from taking part.

Italy need only a point against Cyprus to claim second spot ahead of Norway but victory should be a formality against a team who have lost all seven group matches.

Debate has been raging in Italy over how to bring the best out of the inconsistent Baggio, who became the world's most expensive player when he moved to Juventus for \$13 million last year.

Juventus coach Giovanni Trapattoni said last weekend's league defeat by Sampdoria proved Baggio was not a striker.

But national coach Arrigo Sacchi appears to want to try Baggio up front with Sampdoria's Gianluca Vialli, leaving room for Gianfranco Zola of Napoli in midfield.

Zola made his debut in the 1-1 draw with Norway last month and his performance was one of the few bright spots.

Sacchi, who coached AC Milan

to successive European Cup triumphs in 1989 and 1990, has called six new players into his 23-strong squad.

Internazionale's Dino Baggio, no relation to Roberto, could make his debut at right-back with AC Milan midfielders Demetrio Albertini and Alberigo Evani also set to win their first caps.

The Italians have sportingly played down the prospect of a back-door entry to the European finals.

Veteran defender Franco Baresi summed up the players' feelings when he told Italian television he hoped both the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia would be able to take up the places they had deservedly won.

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 &
 Happy
 New Year
 1992
 The Saddle Gang



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GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TANNAH HIRSCH
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THE RIGHT LINE

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♦ Q 7 6 4 2

♦ A Q 5 3

♦ 7 4 2

WEST
♦ 10 8 5 3

♦ 6

♦ Q J 10 3

♦ A J 10 9

SOUTH
♦ A K

♦ 10 9 8 4 2

♦ A 5

♦ Q 8 6 3

The bidding:

North East South West

Pass Pass 1 - Pass

3 - Pass 4 - Pass

Pass Pass

Opening lead: Queen of

Bridge Today (available from

Ballston Lake, N.Y. 12019, \$21 for

six issues annually) is in its third

year of publication, and the maga-

zine has shown consistent improve-

ment. This hand is from an article

by one of the world's leading

player/writers, Eddie Kantar.

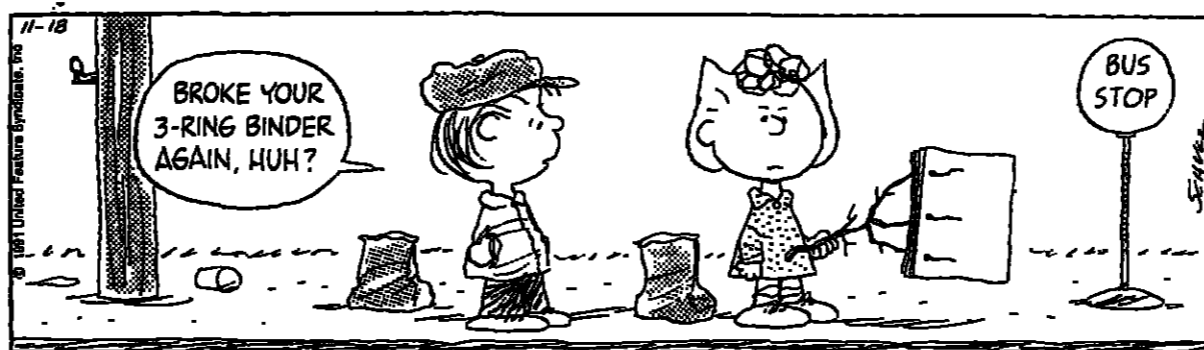
slightly prefer a jump to four hearts over the suggested jump to three hearts. Two hearts can be dismissed out of hand as too pusillanimous. To view the problem as posed, cover up the East-West hands and decide how you would play four hearts after the lead of the queen of diamonds.

There are all sorts of finesses you can take in the trump suit, and you have done well if you ignored such temptations. As long as hearts break no worse than 3-1 and spades 4-2, you can claim your contract.

Your best chance is to win the ace of diamonds and cash the ace and king of spades. When both defenders follow, you are practically home. Continue with a trump to the ace, and as long as no one shows out, you have landed your game.

Leave both missing trumps outstanding and cash the queen of spades. Regardless of whether or not a defender ruffs, discard your diamond loser from hand. Suppose East ruffs and catches the king of hearts. You still have three trumps in hand to ruff a spade, thereby setting up a long spade in dummy, and two diamonds. If no one ruffs, ruff a spade to establish the 13th spade and concede a club. The defenders cannot take more than two trump tricks and a club.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

WROPE

UGLIE

LYNFOD

MIRSUQ

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

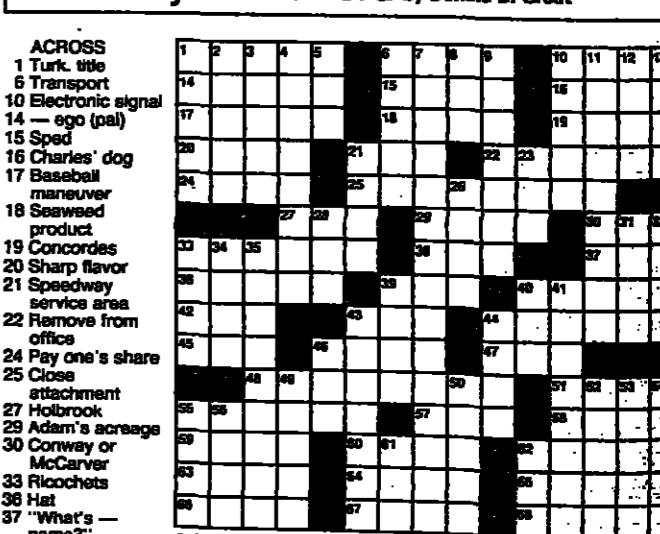
Print answer here: _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: DITTY STROKE TIMELY LAUNCH

Answer: How a successful thief goes about his business—"STEAL-THLY"

THE Daily Crossword by Donald B. Groot



ACROSS	DOWN
1 Turk. title	1 Rictorians offering
2 Transport	2 Part of EAP
3 Electronic signal	3 Assigned period
4 — egg (pl)	4 Porcupine
5 Sped	5 Metric measure
6 Charles' dog	6 Sedate
7 Baseball maneuver	7 Steel the show
8 Seaweed product	8 Senior's savings
9 Concordes	9 Read leisurely
10 Sharp flavor	10 Singing voice
11 Speedway service area	11 Indispensable
12 Remove from office	12 Singer James
13 Pay one's share	13 History
14 Attachment	14 Bureaucracy
15 McCarver	15 Rhythmic
16 Corcoran	16 Revises
17 Ricochets	17 Latin word
18 Hat	18 Letters for Jesus
19 "What's — same?"	19 Remember —
20 Pedro's friend	20 John of "Floors"
21 Small amount	21 Nonsense
22 Bee formation	
23 Leg or house	
24 Machine part	
25 Showy flower	
26 Dogma	
27 Ship's track	
28 — jima	
29 Mex. resort	
30 Acropolis Bonet	
31 Father or mother	
32 One engaged in suit	
33 Actor	
34 Jennings	
35 Shorty	
36 Swenson of "Benson"	
37 Busy	
38 Seditious	
39 US newspaper publisher	
40 I hear you!	
41 Butterfne	
42 Observe	
43 Go-between	

YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE SOLVED:	
ACROSS	DOWN
1 TURKISH	1 RICTORIANS
2 TRANSPORT	2 PART OF EAP
3 ELECTRONIC SIGNAL	3 ASSIGNED PERIOD
4 EGG	4 PORCUPINE
5 SPEED	5 METRIC MEASURE
6 CHARLES' DOG	6 SEDATE
7 BASEBALL MANEUVER	7 STEAL THE SHOW
8 SEAWEED PRODUCT	8 SENIOR'S SAVINGS
9 CONCORDS	9 READ LEISURELY
10 SHARP FLAVOR	10 SINGING VOICE
11 SPEEDWAY SERVICE AREA	11 INDISPENSABLE
12 REMOVE FROM OFFICE	12 SINGER JAMES
13 PAY ONE'S SHARE	13 HISTORY
14 ATTACHMENT	14 BUREAUCRACY
15 MCCARVER	15 RHYTHMIC
16 CORCORAN	16 REVISES
17 RICOCHETS	17 LATIN WORD
18 HAT	18 LETTERS FOR JESUS
19 "WHAT'S — SAME?"	19 REMEMBER —
20 PEDRO'S FRIEND	20 JOHN OF "FLOORS"
21 SMALL AMOUNT	21 NONSENSE
22 BEE FORMATION	
23 LEG OR HOUSE	
24 MACHINE PART	
25 SHOWY FLOWER	
26 DOGMA	
27 SHIP'S TRACK	
28 — JIMA	
29 MEX. RESORT	
30 ACROPSIS BONET	
31 FATHER OR MOTHER	
32 ONE ENGAGED IN SUIT	
33 ACTOR	
34 JENNINGS	
35 SHORTY	
36 SWENSON OF "BENSON"	
37 BUSY	
38 SEDITION	
39 US NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER	
40 I HEAR YOU!	
41 BUTTERFLY	
42 OBSERVE	
43 GO-BETWEEN	

Financial Markets

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close	Tel Aviv Close
Sterling Pound	1.8293	1.8282
Deutsche Mark	1.5713	1.5740
Swiss Franc	1.3925	1.3935
French Franc	5.3700	5.3755
Japanese Yen	126.50	128.70
European Currency Unit	1.2954	1.2950

Forward Interest Rates

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	4.81	4.43	4.43	4.56
Sterling Pound	10.81	10.66	10.50	10.43
Deutsche Mark	9.56	9.50	9.43	9.37
Swiss Franc	8.25	9.12	8.06	7.87
French Franc	9.62	9.75	9.68	9.56
Japanese Yen	6.25	6.00	5.75	5.56
European Currency Unit	10.43	10.40	10.28	10.05

Forward Interest Rates

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	4.81	4.43	4.43	4.56
Sterling Pound	10.81	10.66	10.50	10.43
Deutsche Mark	9.56	9.50	9.43	9.37
Swiss Franc	8.25	9.12	8.06	7.87
French Franc	9.62	9.75	9.68	9.56
Japanese Yen	6.25	6.00	5.75	5.56
European Currency Unit	10.43	10.40	10.28	10.05

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.5790	0.6810
Sterling Pound	1.2393	1.2455
Deutsche Mark	0.4310	0.4332
Swiss Franc	0.4666	0.4690
French Franc	0.1262	0.1268
Japanese Yen	0.5275	0.5301
Dutch Guilder	0.3826	0.3845
Swedish Krona	0.1180	0.1186
Italian Lira	0.0571	0.0574
Belgian Franc	0.02094	0.02104

Other Currencies

Currency	Bid	Offer
Rabat Dirham	1.7720	1.7780
Lebanese Lira	0.0770	0.0775
Saudi Riyal	0.1807	0.1813
Kuwaiti Dirham	0.1840	0.1849
Qatari Riyal	0.2050	0.2180
Egyptian Pound	1.7380	1.7460
Omani Riyal	0.1840	0.1849
UAE Dirham	0.3755	0.3770
Greek Drachma	1.5080	1.5190
Cypriot Pound		

CAB Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	17/12/1991 Close	18/12/1991 Close
All-Share	129.14	129.35
Banking Sector	106.71	106.82
Insurance Sector	127.81	128.35
Industry Sector	162.80	163.13
Services Sector	143.46	143.86

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One Sterling	1.8360/70	U.S. dollar	1.548/53
One U.S. dollar	1.5540/50	Canadian dollar	1.7530/40
	1.3818/28	Deutsche marks	32.02/03
	5.3200/50	Swiss francs	1178/1179
	128.35/45	French francs	5.6825/6925
	6.1250/1350	Belgian francs	6.0650/0650
	356.00/356.50	Italian lire	
		Japanese yen	
		Swedish crowns	
		Norwegian crowns	
		Danish crowns	
		U.S. dollars	

U.S. Federal Reserve cuts discount rate to 3.5 per cent

WASHINGTON (R) — The Federal Reserve (Fed) Board Friday cut its key discount rate to 3.5 per cent from 4.5 per cent in a bid to stimulate the flagging U.S. economy, which analysts fear is about to slide back into recession.

The latest reduction in the key rate, used by the U.S. central bank to signal cheaper credit for everyone from big business to ordinary consumers, is the sixth cut in a year aimed at breathing life into an economy beset by weak consumer spending and high unemployment.

"The reduction was made on the basis of accumulating evidence, notably monetary and credit conditions, as well as current economic conditions, that point to a receding of inflationary pressures," the Fed said in its statement.

"This action, together with the cumulative effects already in train from previous actions, should provide the basis for a resumption of sustained economic expansion," the statement said.

The Commerce Department announced earlier Friday that the U.S. economy grew at a 1.8 per cent annual rate during the July-September third quarter, a slightly better performance than estimated two weeks ago.

In its second and final measure of the quarter's performance, the department said the economy grew more strongly than the 1.7 per cent rate it estimated on Dec. 4, but was well below an initial

estimate of 2.5 per cent. The expansion in the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) followed a 1.4 per cent rise in the second quarter, the Commerce Department said. GDP, which measures goods and services produced by workers and capital in the United States, had shrunk in the final quarter of 1990 and in 1991's first three months while the economy was deep in recession, but resumed growing weakly in the April-June second quarter.

The government is refocusing attention on GDP rather than on the old economic yardstick of gross national product or GNP that measured output of all workers and capital supplied by the United States no matter they are located.

The White House conceded this week that the economy was effectively still in recession. Industrial output fell in November and new applications for jobless benefits soared by 79,000 in the week ended on Dec. 7.

The chairman of the central bank, Alan Greenspan, told a congressional panel Wednesday that the U.S. economy was "faltering" and on the same day the country's largest carmaker, General Motors, in a jolt to the economy, announced it was closing 21 plants in North America and cutting more than 70,000 jobs over the next several years.

Algeria plans heavy investment, more import flexibility in 1992

ALGIERS (R) — The Algerian government plans to kickstart the economy next year through heavy investment and by giving industry easier access to imported materials and parts.

A national plan for 1992, now with parliament for approval, is built on the bedrock of an estimated \$11.45 billion in earnings from oil and gas.

It will also be underpinned by foreign loans, credit lines and a lower medium and long-term debt service ratio.

The hydrocarbon earnings forecast, some \$220 million down on that envisaged for this year, sees oil fetching an average of \$21 a barrel on the world market for the year and an exchange rate of 22.5 dinars to the dollar.

"The figures ... do not include overseas resources expected from the adoption and implementation of the future law on hydrocarbons," the plan says.

Energy Minister Nordine Ait Laoussine forecast it could bring

\$14 billion in new energy investment over the next 10 years and increased income from higher oil recovery rates at fields suffering from lack of expertise and poor maintenance.

Under the national plan for 1992, total investment for 1992 will be 187 billion dinars (\$8.6 billion), a real rise of seven to eight per cent, after falls in previous years.

At least 17.5 billion dinars (\$800 million), will go into the energy sector.

Housing, building and public works will get 30.8 billion dinars, an increase of 65.6 per cent.

Investment is expected to create some 80,000 more jobs but as the workforce will also rise, to 4.9 million people, up by 1.7 per cent over 1991, unemployment will still hit 22 per cent, compared with 20.2 per cent.

Algeria plans to build up its foreign reserves "with a view to bringing about the commercial convertibility of the dinar before the

end of 1992." The official exchange rate is just over 21 to the dollar. The unofficial rate is almost double.

Industry would get a fillip from greatly increased imports to help it overcome shortages of raw and semi-finished products and spurs to end chronic breakdowns which saw it operating at around 60 per cent efficiency for much of this year.

Last month, the National Statistical Office said industrial output fell 3.5 per cent in the second quarter because of the shortages. More than half of Algeria's companies lost production because of breakdowns, sometimes for up to 30 days.

"In real terms, the total volume of external trade is expected to grow six per cent compared with 1991," the plan says.

"Imports of goods and services will increase in the order of 11 per cent in real terms in opposition to consecutive drops in 1990 (minus

6.3 per cent) and 1991 (minus 7.6 per cent)."

Exports outside the energy field are expected to grow 12 per cent in volume, based on a rise in industrial production of nearly 10 per cent, "but the global level of these exports remains weak (\$520 million)."

Foreign debt repayments, which Prime Minister Sidahmad Ghazali has said had reached crippling proportions, will ease. Foreign debt in 1990 was \$26.5 billion, according to the national plan. In 1991 it fell to \$23.8 billion, of which \$1.2 billion was short-term, and in 1992 will be \$23.5 billion, of which 900 million will be short-term.

"The service ratio on medium-long term debt will drop from 72 per cent in 1991 to 65.5 per cent in 1992."

The national plan warns, however, that resumed productive activity depends on the right goods being imported.

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(Arabic)
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Yeltsin presses ahead with plans to shut down Soviet Union

MOSCOW (AP) — Boris Yeltsin pressed ahead with plans to shut down the Soviet Union by the end of the year by taking over the Soviet Foreign Ministry, the Kremlin and the staff of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

In an interview with Soviet television Thursday, Mr. Gorbachev acknowledged the Soviet Union was nearing its end, but urged a session of the national legislature to legally transfer power to the new Commonwealth.

Mr. Yeltsin's actions, taken in a series of decrees made public Thursday, all but eviscerated the Soviet Union, which has been dying a slow death since a hardline coup failed in August.

Russia also formed a new Russian Ministry of Security based on the old KGB and Russian Interior Ministry, according to the Interfax News Service and the Russian Information Agency.

In his interview, Mr. Gorbachev appeared to have accepted the new commonwealth of independent states, telling Soviet television its formation was in the "decisive" stage.

"The epoch of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is being closed, and the first page of the commonwealth of independent states is being opened," he said.

One of Mr. Gorbachev's advisers, Vadim Zagladin, told the Russian Information Agency Friday that the interview should not be considered his "political

last will" but an attempt to ensure a legal transition of power. Mr. Zagladin said Mr. Gorbachev has received letters and telegrams from foreign politicians, business leaders and cultural figures saying they hope his "positive role" in international affairs will continue.

NATO indicated Thursday that it was nearly ready to recognise the Soviet republics as independent states. In Washington, President Bush said U.S. recognition was "just going to take a little bit of time."

Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Boris Kolokolov said the 240-member Russian diplomatic staff would be increased, and able Soviet diplomats could find jobs. "Real professionals won't remain unemployed," he was quoted by the Soviet News Agency (TASS) as saying.

Viktor Barannikov, who was named Soviet interior minister after the failed August coup, was named head of the new Russian Ministry of Security and Interior Affairs. It will control police and riot troops.

Mr. Yeltsin also signed a measure raising the pay of all intelligence and security personnel by 90 per cent as of Jan. 1. Earlier this month, he boosted military pay by 90 per cent.

The Russian president has said for "all practical purposes" that Gorbachev has no future role in the Soviet government which is to be disbanded by the new year.

But in an interview published Thursday, Mr. Gorbachev said he will "decide his destiny" after a weekend meeting of republic leaders. An aide denied another report that Mr. Gorbachev has already drawn up his resignation.

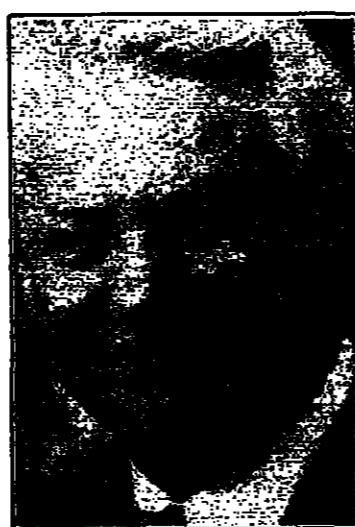
Reports have said Mr. Gorbachev might resign after leaders of nine republics meet Saturday in Alma-Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan, to endorse the new commonwealth.

Mr. Gorbachev has not been invited to the meeting but has sent messages to all the republic leaders there, asking they clarify their positions on the commonwealth and its new government structures.

The Soviet leader had tried to keep the Soviet Union together with a new treaty that would have kept a central government and given the republics greater independence. But most of the republics said they wanted to go their own way, while maintaining some economic and political ties.

That concept took shape on Dec. 8 when Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia announced the formation of a commonwealth and invited other republics to join. Six more are to sign on Saturday at a meeting in Alma-Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan.

In his television interview Mr. Gorbachev expressed support for a proposal from Kazakhstan to call the new grouping the Commonwealth of Independent European States, and noted the dual



Boris Yeltsin

continent formula was first raised by the late Andrei Sakharov. But Mr. Yeltsin is expected to dominate the Alma-Ata meeting, where he is expected to sign two landmark agreements.

One would welcome Armenia and the five Asian republics into the commonwealth as equal co-founders, the other would create a common nuclear defence.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said Thursday he received "very, very firm assurances" during a five-day tour of the disintegrating country that there would be strict centralised control over the Soviet Union's estimated 27,000 nuclear warheads.

NATO formally opens door to East Europeans

BRUSSELS (AP) — The NATO allies held unprecedented security talks Friday with their former adversaries in Eastern Europe, and Russian President Boris Yeltsin sent a message asking to eventually join the alliance.

"Today we are raising a question of Russia's membership in NATO, however, regarding it as a long-term political aim," Mr. Yeltsin said in a prepared speech read by the Soviet ambassador to Belgium, Nikolai Afanasyevsky.

Mr. Yeltsin, moving to enhance his powers before the formation of a new commonwealth of former Soviet republics, said he considered ties to the 16-nation North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) "to be very serious."

"This is a historic day for the alliance and for all of Europe," U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said at the inaugural meeting of a special NATO forum.

"Not long ago, our meetings focused on a very different business — the nations now assembled around this table were on opposing sides in a cold war," he said.

"Today signifies the coming together of West and East," said British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd. "It's very important."

NATO's Secretary-General, Manfred Woerner, exulted, "If ever history witnessed a profound turnaround, this is such a unique moment. Europe will not be the same after our meeting today."

The new forum — the North Atlantic Cooperation Council — was set up last month by President George Bush and other Western leaders as a way of drawing their former enemies closer without granting them full NATO membership.

The allies want to offer the nations Western know-how in controlling their Soviet-trained military and converting their defence industries to civilian uses. But Mr. Yeltsin said he wanted the allies to accept new members. Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary also have said they would like to belong someday.

Nations invited to take part in the council are the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania and the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

"Today, it is important to rapidly overcome the heritage of confrontation," Mr. Yeltsin said. The former adversaries should move forcefully to cut their "military potentials," even beyond an East-West accord signed last year to slash the level of non-nuclear weapons in Europe, he said.

The Russian Federation president said the new cooperation council would contribute to a "climate of mutual understanding and trust, strengthening stability and cooperation on the European continent."

Mr. Baker, who Thursday wound up a five-day trip through the crumbling Soviet Union, cautioned about the "new dangers" facing the European continent.

"Old structures are breaking up. New nations are struggling with the political, economic and security necessities of statehood," he said.

Vatican to recognise Croatia, Slovenia soon

VATICAN CITY (R) — The Vatican said Friday it was ready to recognise the breakaway Yugoslav Republics of Croatia and Slovenia soon.

Chief Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls told reporters: "Croatia and Slovenia have asked the European Community and, therefore, even the Holy See, for recognition."

"Once their willingness to fulfil conditions, which we have communicated to the respective governments, has been ascertained, the Holy See will not fail to accept such a request, recognising the sovereignty and independence of the two republics."

Arch. Navarro was referring to conditions for recognition, relating to democratic rule and respect for minority rights, laid down at a meeting of European Community foreign ministers last Monday.

The Vatican has been accused of siding with Catholic Croatia and Slovenia against predominantly Orthodox Serbia.

But Arch. Navarro said Friday's decision was not meant to be against any party.

"The Holy See in fact firmly intends to maintain good relations with all of Yugoslavia's republics," he said.

Arch. Navarro said the Vatican was ready to apply the same conditions for recognition to any Yugoslav republic that requested it.

Meanwhile, heavy fighting flared across Croatia Friday, a day after Germany promised to recognise the rebel republic, and the main federal newspaper said Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic had resigned.

The daily Borba said Mr. Markovic, a Croat and one of the last vestiges of federal Yugoslavia, had verbally tendered his resignation in a row Thursday over a "war budget" which would fund the Yugoslav army.

The report could not immediately be confirmed but Mr.

Markovic held talks Friday morning with Herbert Okun, head of a team of United Nations observers exploring prospects for sending in thousands of U.N. peacekeeping troops.

Asked if Mr. Markovic had resigned, Mr. Okun told Reuters: "He certainly did not deny it. The prime minister has said he will not support this budget. He thinks it is very high on the military side."

Mr. Okun said Mr. Markovic's resignation would not affect his mission and that the key condition for dispatching a peacekeeping force remained establishing a solid ceasefire.

Rival Croatian and Serbian media reported some of the fiercest fighting for weeks between Croatian forces and Serbian irregulars backed by the Serbian-led Yugoslav army.

Belgrade Radio said Croatian forces pounded predominantly Serbian villages around Vukovar in eastern Croatia, near the border with Serbia.

It said fighting was fierce but the attack was repulsed. Material losses were great and a number of people were wounded.

Croatian radio reported mortar and artillery battles in the east, centre and west of the republic. It accused the army of starting fighting around Osijek in eastern Croatia and attacking Zadar on the Adriatic coast and Karlovac south of the Croatian capital Zagreb.

The fighting had worsened Thursday as European Community mediator Lord Carrington ended his latest mission reporting little progress and Yugoslavia hurtling towards collapse.

The German cabinet said Thursday it would grant formal recognition on Jan. 15 to any Yugoslav republic that seeks independence and meets EC conditions on democracy, human rights, stable borders and minority rights.

Column

New compound slows AIDS virus

WASHINGTON (R) — The search for a successful AIDS treatment has yielded a new type of compound that slows the virus, U.S. researchers reported Thursday in this week's issue of Science magazine. Scientists at Hoffmann-La Roche Inc., working with others at the University of California and Columbia University, said the compound slowed the growth of the virus in cells already infected with HIV. In laboratory tests, the compound inhibited reproduction of HIV — human immunodeficiency virus — in situations where AZT was ineffective, the researchers wrote. HIV is the virus that leads to the development of AIDS — acquired immune deficiency syndrome — for which there is no known cure. Paul Oestreich, spokesman for the drug company, said a drug based on this compound is being tested for safety in AIDS patients. "We don't have any idea of its activity in people yet. It shows a great deal of promise in the laboratory," he said in a telephone interview. The new compound works on cells that are chronically infected.

Billy Idol denies hitting woman

LOS ANGELES (R) — British rock star Billy Idol has pleaded not guilty to a charge of punching a woman in the face and injuring her with one of his trademark silver rings. The spike-haired Idol, 36, whose hit songs include Rebel Yell, White Wedding and Crabby Appleton, entered his plea to an assault and battery charge through his lawyer in Beverly Hills Municipal Court. Amber Nevel, 22, told police she was driving in the same car as Idol early on Oct. 11 when he suddenly began shouting and punched her. She said she was taken to hospital and treated for a cut mouth, a bruised forehead and slight concussion.

Silence Of The Lambs wins critics awards

NEW YORK (R) — The Silence Of The Lambs, a hit film about the hunt for a serial killer, won the four major awards given by the New York film critics circle in what could be a forerunner of the Academy Awards. The New York awards are often a barometer for the Oscars, and Jonathan Demme's film, based on the best-selling novel by Thomas Harris, was named best picture with Demme named best director. Jodie Foster, who played the FBI agent in search of the killer, was named best actress, and British actor Anthony Hopkins, who played the insane psychiatrist Hannibal "the cannibal" Lecter, was named best actor. Europe Europa, a Polish film about a Jew passing himself off as a gentile in Hitler's Europe, was named best foreign film, and Paris Is Burning, a film about a transvestite ball, was named best documentary.

British recession hits father Christmas

LONDON (R) — Even Father Christmas is not immune to Britain's recession. Letters sent to "reindeerland" by British children are down by nearly half of the 750,000 posted last year. A team of 100 paid volunteers replies to the letters. "We are busy sending replies with the Reindeerland stamp to tell children to be good and Father Christmas will call on them," volunteer organiser Terry McMahon said.

Britain to put women pilots in the hot seat

LONDON (R) — The British Air Force said it was giving women pilots the chance to fly fast combat jets for the first time. Women will now fly Tornados, Harriers, Buccaneers and Jaguars used in frontline action, the Ministry of Defence said. Women were first allowed to train as Royal Air Force (RAF) pilots and navigators in non-combat aircraft in 1989. "From now on they will be permitted to fly in all RAF aircraft," the ministry said. "They will be expected to meet the same medical and physical standards as their male colleagues." The first woman combat pilot will take up duties with a fast jet squadron in about a year.

Bush links recognition of Soviet republics to nuclear weapons

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — President George Bush said Thursday that U.S. recognition of republics in the crumbling Soviet Union and a new commonwealth designed to bind them together depends on their willingness to contain nuclear weapons on their soil.

Mr. Bush, nothing that Secretary of State James Baker visited several key Soviet republics this week, said "he has made clear that certain steps have to be taken, particularly in this nuclear question, which is vital."

Contending that "the United States is uniquely qualified to lead" in matters of nuclear arms, Mr. Bush told a news conference of mostly non-U.S. correspondents that Washington was in no rush to establish formal ties with the republics that are replacing the Soviet Union.

He also refused to be pinned down on when the United States would be willing to deal with the commonwealth of independent states declared on Dec. 8 by

Russian President Boris Yeltsin and leaders of two other Slavic republics.

"Now they got a lot of sorting out to do as this new commonwealth is born," Mr. Bush said. "And we are not fixing to get into the middle of that until they've gone further with the process."

U.S. policy has swung rapidly towards the republics in the past three weeks, but Mr. Bush earlier had not openly tied diplomatic recognition with their policy on nuclear weapons on their soil.

Mr. Baker, in Kiev Wednesday, gave a strong indication that Washington would soon recognise Ukraine as an independent state after receiving satisfactory assurances on its nuclear arms policy.

Mr. Baker said after meeting President Leonid Kravchuk that the United States was satisfied with Ukrainian promises on democracy, economic reform and nuclear safety.

When a reporter noted to Mr. Bush that Sweden has recognised

Russian, Byelorussia and Ukraine and asked when Mr. Bush would do the same, he replied: "We're taking these things under advisement."

"We don't know, can't give you an exact date," he said, explaining that he feels "a certain custodial responsibility on this whole question of nuclear weapons, nonproliferation."

"I think we have a disproportionate responsibility for that, and so we want to see these questions ... resolved or moved along on the way to resolution," he said.

Washington has long opposed the spread of nuclear weapons and tried hard to limit those countries who control them. The collapse of the Kremlin has generated fears that new states could become nuclear powers overnight.

"We're very flexible and open about the question of recognition, but we also want to see adherence to these principles that I've outlined," Mr. Bush said.

New Australian premier sworn in

SYDNEY (AP) — Paul Keating was sworn in Friday as Australia's 24th prime minister, taking over a deeply divided Labour Party and an equally troubled country.

Mr. Keating ousted Bob Hawke for leadership of the ruling Australian Labour Party Thursday. A vote by 107 party members was 56-51 in favour of removing Mr. Hawke, a former union leader who had held the country's top post for nearly nine years.

Governor-General Bill Hayden conducted the shorn swearing-in ceremony in a government house sitting room in Canberra. Mr. Keating, watched by his wife, Anita, and their four children, took the oath flanked by a brightly decorated Christmas tree with gifts underneath.

Mr. Keating's present had arrived a day earlier. It was the former treasurer's second try at the leadership, having failed in his first attempt by more than 20 votes on June 3.

Mr. Hayden, now Queen Elizabeth II's vice-regal representative in Australia, knows the situation well. He was replaced by Mr. Hawke as Labour Party leader in a similar party-room coup in 1983, shortly before Mr. Hawke was elected to his first term as prime minister.

While Mr. Keating, 47, took the oath of office, Mr. Hawke performed his last duty as prime minister, dedicating an aboriginal painting at Parliament House. Several of Mr. Hawke's supporters and cabinet ministers were on hand to hear his tear-filled speech.

We don't promise you a rose garden... But we make a tough person out of you.

JORDAN VALLEY ARABIAN STUD

- The Jordan Valley Arabian Stud announces the beginning of the course for the cross-country riding to Ma'an. The round trip is 500 kilometres. Those who are interested must be at the Jordan Valley Arabian Stud every Friday at 5 o'clock in the morning.
- The first test will be 50 kilometres to test the rider and the timing will be four hours of riding, trot, canter, gallop. Participants must call Thursday morning to confirm their arrival unless the weather does not allow the trip.
- The course will start on Friday Dec. 27. Timing is essential. Anyone who does not show at the designated place and time will be disqualified.
- ☆☆ The trip will be lead by the Ret. Col. Nasser Mirza and Mr. Sa'ed Taha the retired administrator manager of the Royal Stables who has 40 years experience in cavalry and riding. This course is open for Jordanians and non-Jordanians.
- There is a special programme for the handicapped children free of charge.
- ☆☆ The club is open all day to the public to see the activities and also the pure Arabian horses registered with World Arabian Horse Organisation (WAHO). Entrance is free for the public.
- For further information contact the office of the club, telephone number: 829882, Fax 829883. Jaber Trading Centre - Mecca Street.

S. African talks launched with mixed messages

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The first session of South Africa's democracy talks opened Friday with delegates confident they could put more than four decades of white rule behind them and grasp the prize of a non-racial constitution.

Nineteen groups representing the white government, tribal leaders and anti-apartheid movements gathered at a Johannesburg conference centre in a bid to agree a peaceful way to extend political power from the country's white establishment enclave.

"The moment of truth has now arrived for all of us. We can no longer avoid our trust with destiny," said Supreme Court Judge Ismail Mahomed, co-chairman of the talks.

The two-day convention, to be held in public, got under way with minimum pomp and ceremony with the leader of each delegation giving a 15-minute policy speech.

Signs of compromise were the air early when African National Congress (ANC) President Nelson Mandela indicated that the ANC would accept a transitional government elected by conference delegates alone.

"An interim government, important as it may be, is but the product of agreement between

ourselves as political parties and organisations. It will not be the outcome of full participation by the people of our country," he said.

The ANC had previously demanded an interim government to be elected by a one-man-one-vote poll, saying it did not trust the government of President F.W. de Klerk to oversee the transition process.

Mandela said the talks, named the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), provided the best chance for a peaceful settlement to the country's political problems since the white-ruled Union of South Africa was promulgated in 1910.

"Our country has lived through eight decades of wasted opportunity. CODESA provides the first opportunity to attempt to establish democracy in our country," Mandela said.

"The message from the ANC ... is plain and simple, and for all South Africans, the time for one South Africa, one nation, one vote, one future, is here," he said in Afrikaans, the language of the Dutch-descended white establishment.

The conference is expected to adopt a declaration of intent which will plot the way forward

for the democracy process with further plenary sessions and a welter of planning committees to meet next year.

Conference sources said the declaration would bind parties to the basic tenet of multi-party democracy, regular elections, an independent judiciary, the supremacy of the constitution and a division of executive, legislative and judicial power.

The sources said they expected all parties to sign except the autocratic president of Bophuthatswana tribal homeland, Lucas Mangope, who does not want to relinquish his nominal independence.

"I regret that I cannot unreservedly commit myself to the declaration of intent as it is presently formulated and therefore cannot sign it," Mr. Mangope said in his opening speech.

"The people of Bophuthatswana must have the final say in our future," he added.

The conference has been boycotted by the white opposition Conservative Party, which judges the process as a handover of the country to the black majority, and by black radical groups which refuse to talk to "the white regime."

Representatives of both factions picketed the conference but there were no major disturbances at the well-guarded site.

A shadowy extremist right-wing white supremacist organisation also threatened to blow up the conference hall but police reported no incidents.

Meanwhile, nine blacks were shot dead in a squatter camp outside Johannesburg, ANC officials said Friday.

ANC supporters scoured the squatted Tamboville township, scene of repeated incidents of political violence, in search of the culprits.

"Gunmen wielding AK-47 (automatic rifles) randomly opened fire and killed nine people at Tamboville," Squatter Camp. We are trying to find clues of the killers because we know police would take their time," ANC official Ronnie Mamope said.

Police said they knew of seven deaths and five injuries and dismissed accusations that they were slow in investigating.

More than 4,000 people have been killed since August 1990 in political warfare between supporters of the ANC and those of its main anti-apartheid rival, the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party.

Representatives of both factions